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RISE AND GROWTH OF BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA

Q. 1. Review the origin and growth of British empire in India.

Among the Europeans, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British came to India. Primarily, they came here for the purpose of trade but the weak political condition of India encouraged them all, except the Dutch, to participate in politics and establish their rule here. The Portuguese being eliminated by the Dutch, and the Dutch, being indifferent towards establishing their empire here, the French and the British alone were left to contest for political power in India in the 18th century. Their contest resulted in three Karnataka Wars among which, finally, the British emerged victorious.

However, the British empire in India did not begin in the South but in the North from the *Suba* of Bengal which at that time included Bihar and Orissa as well. The British, while being involved in the politics of Bengal, fought two major battles against the then Nawabs of Bengal, *viz.*, the battle of Plassey in A.D. 1757 and the battle of Buxar in A.D. 1764. The British were victors in these battles which made them *de facto* rulers of the *Suba* of Bengal though its direct administration was taken over by them in A.D. 1772 only. The resources of Bengal helped the British in extending their rule in India beyond its frontiers.

Being firmly established in Bengal, the British attempted to conquer the rest of the Indian territories and, by diplomacy and wars, succeeded in their aim by A.D. 1856. Mysore was the first state which fell a prey to British Imperialism in India. Hyder Ali, who had usurped power in Mysore from its Hindu ruler, had to fight against the British for his safety while his son Tipu proved to be their determined enemy. That resulted in four Anglo-Mysore wars in which, the British, finally, emerged victorious in A.D. 1799. The British annexed most of the territory of Mysore while the rest of it was handed over to a descendant of the previous Hindu ruler as a dependent ruler of the British. The British fought three wars against the Marathas and succeeded in subduing them by A.D. 1818. Large territories of the Maratha chiefs were taken over by the British and what was left to them, they ruled over it as dependent rulers of the British. Sindh was annexed by the British in A.D. 1843 after little resistance by its *Amirs*. While the British were busy in other parts

of India, Ranjit Singh had succeeded in establishing a powerful empire in Punjab including Kashmir and the north-west frontier. Ranjit Singh maintained friendly relations with the British. He died in 1839 A.D. Internal dissensions broke up in Punjab after the death of Ranjit Singh and that gave the British the desired opportunity to grab Punjab. The British fought two wars against the Sikhs and won both. Thereafter, the kingdom of Punjab was annexed by the British in A.D. 1849 which extended the British empire upto the natural frontiers of India in the north-west while the ruler of Kashmir became a vassal of the British. Besides these wars, the British extended their empire in India by several other means. The Subsidiary Alliance of Wellesley, the doctrine of lapse of Dalhousie, maladministration of native rulers, etc. were other means and excuses which were resorted to by the British to fulfil their lust of Imperialism in India. Avadh was the last state which was annexed by them in A.D. 1856 on the basis of maladministration. Then took place the revolt of A.D. 1857 which convinced the British that the native states would prove useful instruments in safeguarding their empire in India. Therefore, the policy of annexation was abandoned by them and, in A.D. 1858, it was specifically mentioned in the Declaration of Queen Victoria. However, by that time, the British had occupied most of the Indian territory and the rest of it was left under the rule of those native rulers who had no power to resist the British in any way and who, till the British left India, always remained loyal to the British Crown. On the one hand, the decline and fall of the Mughal empire, failure of the Marathas to emerge as a central power after the fall of the Mughuls and their failure to put up a joint front against the British, incompetency and natural conflicts of the native rulers, absence of national feeling among the Indians, lack of motivation of fighting against a foreign enemy among them, thier medieval concepts and lack of capable leadership and, on the other hand, the superiority of the British in arms and diplomacy, their superior espionage, dedicated leadership among them, motivation of glorifying their motherland and their modern attitudes, etc. were responsible for the success of the British in India which resulted in the subjugation of the Indians for nearly two hundred years.

Points to Remember

1. Among the Europeans, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British came to India respectively.
2. Later on, only the French and the British were left to contest for political power in India in the 18th century which resulted in three Karnatak wars wherein the English were victorious.
3. However, the British began their empire from the *Suba* of Bengal where they conspired and fought the battle of Plassey and the battle of Buxer against the *Nawabs* and became the *de-facto* ruler of the *Suba*.
4. Gradually, the British conquered the state of Mysore, the

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NATURE OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

Q. 1. Discuss the nature of British rule in India and point out its effects.

Primarily, the British came to India for the purpose of trade. Thus, their chief motive was economic and it remained such till their departure from India in 1947. Of course, they acquired political power in India and desired to rule India permanently but this was a means to further their economic interests. Thus, economic exploitation of India for serving the economic interests of Britain was the true nature of British rule in India.

Initially, the British established trade relations with India with a view to exchanging their goods with Indian goods but as they had little to offer in return for the Indian goods, mostly their trading activity was limited to purchase of Indian goods which were sold in Britain and in other European countries at high profits. That was economically advantageous to India as well because the British East India Company created extensive market for Indian goods in Europe. But conditions changed when the Company acquired political power in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The revenue of Bengal provided the Company with sufficient capital for the purchase of Indian goods and there remained no need to bring British goods or invest British capital here. Thus, the Company turned the revenue of Bengal into its capital, purchased Indian goods with it, sent those goods to the European markets which earned it good profits and in return, brought nothing to India. It was, thus, one of the means by which India was drained of its wealth on a large scale. This experience of Bengal whetted the appetite of the British Company to acquire more and more territories in India. That resulted in a deliberate and consistent policy of territorial aggrandizement in India by the Company till 1857.

Besides, during this very period, the economic exploitation of India had increased manifold because of a change in circumstances in Britain and India as well. In 1813, the monopoly of the East India Company over the trade of India was abolished. Then, the trade with India was left open to every British citizen and Trading Company which enlarged the scope of exploitation of the

territories of the Marathas, Sindh and Punjab by wars and extended further their empire by other means as well like the Subsidiary alliance and the Doctrine of lapse and also on plea of maladministration by native rulers the state of Avadh being the last state to be annexed by them in 1856.

5. However, after the revolt of 1857, the British abandoned the policy of annexation. But by that time, the British had complete hold over India and no native-ruler was left in a position to oppose them.

6. Several factors like the fall of the Mughul empire, failure of the Indian rulers to put up a joint front against the British, the superiority of the British in arms and diplomacy, dedicated leadership among them, etc. were responsible for the success of the British.

Indians by the British. In 1833, the British citizens were permitted to purchase land and settle down in India which resulted in the settlement of British citizens as landlords and planters in India. During this very period, industrial revolution gained momentum in Britain. Now, Britain could produce goods on a large scale with the help of machines. Hence, now it required raw material, as also a market for its finished goods. India provided it with both. India, was now required to produce those agricultural goods which were needed by the British industries, particularly cotton. Besides, roads, canals and railway lines were laid in India as means of transport for extending the market for British finished goods. The Indian government adopted the 'policy of free trade' simply to provide better facilities for British trade in India while Britain continued the 'policy of protection' against Indian goods entering Britain. Besides, when the British capitalists amassed surplus capital, they were encouraged to invest it in India where labour was cheaply available and banking facilities were provided to them on preferential terms. All this resulted in increased economic exploitation of India. Of course, certain social, educational and humanitarian measures were taken up by the British in India during this very period, particularly during the 1830's when Humanitarianism and Liberalism were predominant in the politics of Britain. But that did not mean any change in the nature of the British rule in India. It was all primarily because of acceptance of the theory of 'white man's burden' by the Europeans at that time because of certain pressures on the English government in India. Otherwise, Britain continued to exploit India economically by all possible means.

The basic nature of British rule in India did not change even when, in 1858, the governance of India was transferred from the hands of the East India Company to the British Crown after the revolt. On the contrary, it resulted in enhanced economic exploitation of India because India was not to serve the interests of British traders and manufacturers alone but the economic interests of a nation, e.g. Britain. After taking over the governance of India in its own hands, the British government pursued the 'Policy of One Charge' in India, treated India as one unit if and when it suited its administrative and economic interests, brought native rulers under its complete submission and attempted to create those circumstances which could enable its rule to become permanent in India. It was only by the end of the Second World War that the British realized that they could not hold India any more and decided to leave it with a view to keeping good relations with it even afterwards. The British left India only when certain internal and external circumstances forces them to do so. It was so because India served the interests of Britain in so many ways. One among them was the huge population of India which provided good recruits to the British army. It was certainly the Indian army which helped in extending the British empire and keeping it intact also for a long period of time. But,

above all, was the economic advantage which Britain drew from the beginning till the end of its rule in India.

The British rule in India affected Iudians in several ways. It brought certain benefits to Indians. Modern education, rational and scientific attitudes among educated Indians, growth of the ideas of democracy, liberty, equality, humanitarianism etc., education and emancipation of women, establishment of democratic institutions, contact with the western world, discovering of India's glorious past, the rise of several social and religious movements, growth of nationalism, political awakening and organisation, etc. are there because of the impact of the British rule. All these have affected the lives of the Indians favourably. But the British rule affected the lives of the Indians adversely as well. The introduction of English language as the medium of instruction and the emancipation of women on western pattern and such other changes which have affected the cultural life of the Indians can, certainly, be the subjects of controversy but keeping intact vested interests of certain classes, support to regional interests and encouraging communalism are, certainly, the legacy of the British rule in India. However, the worst result of the British rule in India had been on the economic front. Peasants suffered most during their rule. Their revenue policy was largely responsible for it. While the peasants were left to the mercy of the landlords and intermediaries under the Permanent Settlement and *Mahalwari* system, the revenue was kept very high under the *Ryotwari* system. The destruction of handicrafts and cottage industries also put pressure on agriculture. The judicial system also favoured local *banias* and *mahajans*. All this led to fragmentation of holdings, rural indebtedness, increase in landless labour, etc. and finally, impoverishment of the Indian peasants. The British deliberately adopted such policies which resulted in almost complete destruction of Indian handicrafts and cottage industries. The competition with machine-made goods of Britain was also one of the reasons of their decline. The British gave no encouragement to the growth of industries in India and whatever development took place because of the initiative of the Indian enterprisers remained lopsided. It all affected Indian economy adversely. Besides, wealth of India was drained off in several ways. The Home charges (expenditure incurred for administering India in Britain), cost of army training, transport and campaigns outside India but charged on the Indian exchequer guaranteed interest on Railways and pensions of the retired British personnel, part of the salaries and allowances of those still in service, profits earned by British investors, traders and planters, several other kinds of income and the "Investments (income from revenue invested in trade by the British Company) etc., were among several means by which the wealth of India was systematically transferred to Britain. It was a major factor leading to the extreme poverty of Indians. Thus, the British exploited India economically in all possible ways and it remained the worst feature of their rule in India. Even many British scholars accepted it as

such while the Indian national leaders described it as the worst evil of the British rule. One of the primary reasons of Indian national awakening was the realisation by Indian leaders and gradually by Indian masses, traders, industrialists or, rather, all groups of the Indian society that the major cause of the poverty of India was the British rule and if at all their economic interests were to be safeguarded, this rule must be brought to an end and, therefore, all of them participated in the struggle for Indian independence.

Points to Remember

1. Economic exploitation of India for serving the economic interests of Britain was the true nature of British rule in India.
2. The British came to India for trade, and initially their trade with India benefitted India because they opened an extensive market for Indian goods in Europe.
3. However, the position changed when the British got political power in India.
4. The British used the revenue of the *Suba* of Bengal for their investment in trade, earned profit from it which was sent to Britain and, in return, brought nothing to India which, finally, resulted in the 'drain of wealth' from India.
5. The monopoly of trade of the East India Company with India was abolished in 1813 which opened the trade of India to every British citizen and the Company which increased exploitation of India by the British.
6. The Industrial Revolution in Britain extended manifold the economic exploitation of India by the British and, finally, India became an extensive field for producing agriculture goods which were needed by British industries and a good market to receive the finished goods produced by them.
7. The policy of free trade adopted by the Indian government, on the one hand, and the 'policy of protection' pursued by the British government, on the other hand, opened further venues for exploitation of the Indians by the British.
8. The British capitalists invested their surplus capital in India where labour was cheap and banking facilities were favourably available, earned good profits by it and sent it to Britain leading to further exploitation of India.
9. The nature of the British rule did not change even when the British Crown took over the administration of India from the hands of the Company in 1858.
10. On the contrary, it extended the scope of exploitation of India because now India had not to serve the economic interests of British traders and manufacturers only but that of an entire *viz.*, Britain.

11. Only by the end of the second World War, Britain realised that it could not hold India in it's hand any more and decided to leave.

12. It was a forced decision otherwise keeping India under it's subjugation had been beneficial to Britain in several ways particularly the India army had helped it in extending it's empire all over the world.

13. India benefied by British rule in several ways.

14. Modern education, rational attitude, many modern concepts, upsurge of several social and religious movements, national awakening, etc. were beneficial results of British rule in India.

15. But communalism, regionalism, formation of different groups with vested interests were also the heritage of the British rule in India which had harmed India.

16. However, the worst result of the British rule in India was the extreme poverty of the Indians of all sections and that was one reason that prompted all Indians to participate in the struggle for independence.

3

CHALLENGES TO BRITISH POWER : THE REVOLT OF 1857

Or

THE FIRST WAR OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

Q. 1. Discuss resistance of the Indians against the British prior to the Revolt of 1857.

The British rule in India began after the battle of Plassey in A.D. 1757. After a hundred years, the Indians challenged the British rule and attempted to put an end to it in 1857. The attempt has been called the Revolt or the First War of Indian Independence. It is not that the Indians challenged the British only in 1857. A hundred years of British rule had brought misery to the Indians in general. All classes of the Indian society were exploited by the British economically. Indians were disregarded everywhere and were subject to all sorts of humiliations and were mostly treated as inferior human beings. The British were foreigners and remained so all through their rule. Indians were considered slaves simply to serve the interests of the Britishers and their homeland, Britain, in every possible way. Therefore, the people of this country suffered in so many ways. But they failed to put up a united or even a fairly widespread resistance to the British power in India before A.D. 1857. Yet, the revolt of 1857 was not the first challenge of its kind, to the British power in India. Several revolts by several sections of the Indian people occurred even prior to it though their area and purpose remained limited. In 1829 the Khasis, a primitive tribe inhabiting the hilly region in the north-west on the frontier of Assam revolted against the British. The revolt continued for nearly four years and covered a large part of the terrirory of Assam. Besides, again in the north-west, the Singhos revolted in 1830 and again in 1839 ; the Akas revolted between A.D. 1835-42 ; the Nagas revolted between 1849-51 ; the Kukis revolted in 1829, 1844 and in 1849-50 and the Khonds revolted between 1946-48 and in 1855. The Santhals inhabiting the territory of Bihar adjoining Bengal revolted in 1855-56. In *Chota* Nagpur, the Hos revolted in 1827 and again in 1836-37, the Mundas revolted in 1831-32 and the Bhumijis and the Chauras revolted in 1832. At other places in India too isolated groups or individuals resisted the administration. In western *Ghats*, the Bhils revolted in 1817-18 and again in 1819, the Gujars revolted near

Saharanpur in 1824, the same year the Jats revolted near Rohtak and the Kolis in Gujarat in 1824, and again in 1839 and 1844. Besides, the rising of Kolhapur and Savantvadi (1839-45), the revolt of the Rauze family in the disirict of Vizgapatam (1829-32), the rising of the *Zamindar* of Palkonda estate in 1831, the rebellion of Dhananjaya Bhanja, the *Zamindar* of Gumsur in Ganjam District in 1834-35 and the rising of Bundela landowners, Madhukar Sha and Jawahar Singh in Sagar in 1842 are some other examples. But none of these uprisings succeeded and none posed a serious threat to the British power in India.

Points to Remember

1. After a hundred years, the Indians challenged the British rule and attempted to finish it in 1857.
3. The attempt has been called the Revolt or the first war of Indian Independence.
3. However, it was not the first challenge to British power in India.
4. Several revolts occured prior to the revolt of 1857 though their purpose and area remained limited.
5. Among them were the revolt of the Khasis in Assam, the revolts of the Signhos, the Kukis, the Akas, the Nagas and the Khonds in the north-west, revolt of the Santhals in Bihar, the revolts of the Has, the Mundas, the Bhumijis and the Chauras in Chota Nagpur, the revolt of the Bhils in Western Ghats, the revolt of the Gujara in Saharanpur, the revolt of the Jats in Rohtak, and the revolt of the Kolis in Gujrat besides revolts of several landlords like those of Kolhapur, Savantvadi, Palkonda, Gumsur, Sagar, etc.

Q. 2. Discuss the causes of the Revolt of 1857.

The Revolt of 1857 was the result of the culmination of popular discontent that had been building up for a long time against different policies pursued by the British in India, though its immediate cause was provided by the Indian soldiers. Main causes of the revolt are as under :

(1) *Political.* The expansionist policy of the British gave rise to distrust among the rulers of native states. They felt that, sooner or later, their kingdoms would be snatched away by the British. Their fear was confirmed by the policy of annexation of Lord Dalhousie. The people of the states which were annexed to the British territory were also resentful. Many of them distrusted the British rule and many others could not tolerate disrespect of their rulers and the members of their families at the hands of the foreigners. The people of Jhansi and the state of Avadh largely participated in the revolt because of this very reason. The Muslims had yet another grievance against the British. The British occasionally showed disrespect to the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah.

Lord Canning even declared that the title of the Mughal emperor would be abolished after the death of Bahadur Shah and his palace and fort would be taken over by the British. The Indian Muslims had always felt themselves concerned with the honour of the Mughal emperor. Therefore, they developed a strong hatred for the British.

(2) *Administrative.* The Indians disliked and distrusted the administration of the British. The British system had abolished several intermediaries like *Jagirdars*, *Taluqdars*, etc. with whom the people had direct contact and from whom they drew certain advantages as well. Therefore, the system had created a section of of dissatisfied people who wielded influence on the masses. The system lacked personal touch to which the Indians were habituated for the past centuries. The judicial system was costly, mechanical and involved much time. The poor could draw no advantage from it. The rich disliked it because they could be brought to trial even by the appeals of the common people who had been subservient to them for centuries. The police system of the British had not become effective by that time and the people always felt insecure with respect to their life, property and honour. Their revenue system had hit the peasants hard. The Permanent Settlement, the *Mahalwari* system and even the *Ryotwari* system had brought no relief to the peasants in any way whatsoever. Under each of these systems, the peasants had to pay heavy revenue and in case of non-payment had to lose their land. The problems of the Indian peasants, *viz.*, rural indebtedness, fragmentation of holdings, increase in landless labour and alike, rose all because of the revenue administration of the British. They excluded the Indians from all high civil and military posts. That rankled in the hearts of the educated Indians.

(3) *Economic.* The primary motive of the political domination of India by the British was economic exploitation. They established their political power first in the *Suba* of Bengal and within a few decades siphoned off its resources to the extent that its people were not left even with the bare necessaries of life. That became the fate of the people at other places also where the British rule was subsequently established. The trading interests of the British resulted in destruction of cottage industries of India while their revenue policy reduced the peasants to the level of bare existence. The abolition of the Company's monopoly of trade with India in 1813 and the acceptance of the policy of free trade by the Indian government in 1833 aggravated further the exploitation of India by Britain which had started producing machine-made goods, particularly textiles. Ultimately, India became a vast field for the production of raw materials to feed the British industries and a vast market to absorb British manufactures. Besides, India's wealth was drained off by the British in several ways. The poverty in India remained limited not only to a particular section of the society. It enveloped all Indians alike, whether they were peasants, landlords, traders, industrialists, labour or middle-class people. It was a genuine grievance of all the Indians against the British rule in India.

(4) *Social and Religious.* The British regarded the Indians as people of inferior race. They, therefore, looked down upon them socially. The Clubs and Hotels of the Europeans prohibited the entry of Indians. The Indians were shown disrespect in public places and their women dishonoured and, yet, no justice was available to them. The racial arrogance of the British went on increasing with the increase of their political power in India. It antagonised the Indians in toto.

The Indians became apprehensive of the intention of the British concerning their religion. The Charter Act of 1813 permitted Christian missionaries to enter India and they started coming to India in large numbers. The missionaries attempted to propagate Christianity by every possible means in India. The government did not attempt to restrict their activities. Rather, certain laws passed by the government gave the impression that it was one with them. The missionaries established mission schools and encouraged female education. Religious education was a part of syllabus in all these schools. The prisoners in jails were also tempted to accept Christianity. Regulations framed by the government in its hospitals also generated apprehensions in the minds of the Indians. They, therefore, feared that the English were attempting to convert them all to Christianity.

The Company's government passed certain laws which also gave birth to distrust among the people. In 1832 and in 1850, laws were passed concerning succession of property. The Religious Disabilities Act of 1856 also declared that none would be deprived of his hereditary property on the ground of changing his religion. The prohibition of *Sati* in 1829 and the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 though passed by the active support of liberal Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were looked upon by the orthodox Hindus as interference in their religion. Thus, the Indians felt in general that the government was interfering in their religion and social mores.

(5) *Military.* Besides these apprehensions which the soldiers shared with the civilians, they had certain grievances of their own against the British. They were paid low salaries. The British started recruiting people of lower castes in the Bengal army which previously consisted mostly of the Rajputs and the Brahmins. It was disliked by them. The annexation of Avadh was resented by the soldiers, three-fifths of whom belonged to Avadh. Not only did they resent the disrespect shown to the *Nawab* but they also felt aggrieved because many among them indirectly lost certain privileges as their relatives were deprived of the patronage of the *Nawab*. The Bengal army was the backbone of the British Indian army. Its dissatisfaction was a major cause of the Revolt. The soldiers in general were dissatisfied because they were asked to go for fighting to distant places without any extra remuneration or reward. In 1854 A.D., soldiers were deprived of their privilege of postage-free letters. In

1856 A.D. Lord Canning passed 'The General Service Enlistment Act' which decreed that all future recruits in the Bengal army, wherein service was hereditary, would be liable to be deputed anywhere and all those who would be found unfit for service in a foreign country would not be given pension but a job in the cantonment. The soldiers, therefore, felt that while their sons desirous of joining the army in all likelihood would lose their castes, they themselves had been deprived of a privilege to which they were entitled so far. The proportion of Indian soldiers as compared to British soldiers had increased in the army. The morale of the British soldiers was also at a low ebb because of the odds the British had faced in the Crimean War in Europe. Under these circumstances, the Indian soldiers felt that if they struck at the opportune time they had quite a good chance to turn out the British from India. It was, certainly, an incitement to soldiers for staging a revolt.

Thus, both the civilians and the soldiers were in a temper to revolt. Nearly a hundred years of British rule had created an explosive situation in India. Only a spark was needed to kindle the fire and that was provided by the greased cartridges. In 1856 the Company's government introduced the 'Enfield Rifle' in the army and arrangements for training in its use were made at Dum Dum, Ambala and Sialkot. The top of the cartridge of this rifle was to be removed by the mouth before loading it in the rifle. In 1857 a story got currency in the Bengal army that the cartridges were greased by the fat of the pig and the cow. The British refuted the story but the soldiers remained unconvinced. They believed that the British were deliberately attempting to endanger the religion of both the Hindus and the Muslims. There is complete unanimity among scholars that the fat of the pig and the cow was certainly used in greasing these cartridges, though it might not have been a deliberate attempt on the part of the British. The soldiers refused to use those cartridges and, finally, revolted. The greased cartridges, thus, were the primary and immediate cause of the revolt. The revolt started with the army and, when it initially succeeded at Meerut and Delhi, the people also joined it in large numbers.

Points to Remember

1. The revolt of 1857 was the result of the culmination of popular discontent that had been building up for a long time against the British though its immediate cause was provided by the revolt of soldiers.
2. Several causes were responsible for the great rising. These were as follows :
   (a) The fear of the native rulers that their states would be taken over by the English, the resentment of the people of the annexed states and the occasional disrespect shown to Bahadur Shah, the Mughul emperor by the English constituted the political causes.

(b) The impersonal nature of the British administration and judiciary, the ineffectiveness of the police-system, the rigours of the revenue-system and keeping away of the Indians from the services had created a sense of general discontent among the people.

(c) The worst effect of the British rule was the impoverishment of the Indian people because Indian handicrafts were destroyed, foreign trade was monopolised by the English and the peasants suffered because of the high demand of the revenue.

(d) The racial arrogance of the English, the activities of the missionaries, the passing of social legislation, etc., created distrust among the people and they feared that the English were bent upon polluting their religion and society.

(e) The low salaries of the Indian soldiers, recruitment of soldiers of all castes, deprivation of the facility of postage-free letters, the passing of General Service Enlistment Act 1856, etc., created discontent among the soldiers.

(f) The introduction of the 'Enfield Rifle', the use of the fat of pig and cow in greasing its cartridges and the insistence of the English on using them by the soldiers led to the outbreak of the revolt in May, 1857.

(g) The revolt began with the soldiers at Meerut and then, after the capture of Delhi, people joined it in large numbers.

Q. 3. Do you think that the Revolt of 1857 was an organised attempt by the civilians or the soldiers to turn out the British from India ?

There is a controversy among scholars regarding organisation of the revolt of 1857. One group of historians has opined that the revolt was the result of a widespread and well-organised conspiracy. Dr. Ishwari Prasad has contended that breads were distributed and taken from village to village and red lotus flower was taken over from one regiment to another as token of their agreement for participating in the revolt. It has also been expressed by this group of historians that Nana Sahib, son of the deceased *Peswa* Baji Rao, Maulvi Ahmad Shah of Faizabad and some others, including some native rulers, had organised the conspiracy against the British and even the date of the revolt was fixed as 31st May. Dr. Tara Chand, Dr. Bisheswar Prasad and many other reputed historians have agreed with this view. Dr. Bisheswar Prasad writes : "It will be difficult to assume in the face of available evidence that the revolt erupted suddenly without prior preparation and some organisation." But the other group of historians denies the existence of any organised conspiracy against the British with equal force. They point out that not a scrap of paper was discovered before or after the revolt indicating an organised conspiracy. Dr. S.N. Sen and Dr. R.C. Majumdar

who have done latest researches in this field have dented the existence of any planned and organised effort by anybody prior to the beginning of the revolt. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad also wrote : "The events of 1857 were not the result of careful planning, nor were there any master minds behind it."

Points to Remember

1. There is a controversy among scholars regarding organisation of the revolt of 1857.
2. Dr. Ishwari Prasad, Dr. Tara Chand and several other historians have opined that the revolt was an organised one but Dr. S. N. Sen and Dr. R. C. Majumdar have expressed the view that the revolt was not organised.

Q. 4. Discuss the main events of the Revolt of 1857.

In January 1857, an Indian soldier of the regiment at Dum Dum, about five miles away from Calcutta, was coming back with his *lota* (a small metal water-pot) full of water. A low-caste *Khalasi* of the ordinance factory at Dum-Dum met the soldier in the way and asked for water. The soldier was a *Brahmin* and, therefore, refused on the plea that his *lota* would be defiled. The *Khalasi* was irritated and said that the British would defile the caste of everyone by forcing all soldiers to use the cartridges greased in the fat of the cow and the pig. The soldier believed his statement as the *Khalasi* worked in the factory where the cartridges were manufactured. The soldier conveyed this news to his fellow soldiers. The news soon spread in the cantonment at Barrackpur. The soldiers of the 19th regiment, therefore, refused to use those cartridges though, later on, they submitted. Yet, their leaders were punished and the regiment was disbanded. On March 20, Mangal Pandey of 34th regiment fired at his sergent-major and asked other Indian soldiers to revolt against the British. But he and one other active soldier were captured and executed. Then, the 34th regiment was also disbanded. Like protests were made by the soldiers at Ambala and Lucknow as well. The regiment at Lucknow was also disbanded.

Thus, the soldiers at different places refused to use the greased cartridges. They had no desire to revolt. But the Government insisted on using the cartridges and punished those who refused to obey. On 24th April, 1985 soldiers of the 3rd Cavalry regiment at Meerut refused to use the cartridges. They were punished with ten years' rigorous imprisonment. On 9th May, they were brought naked before the entire regiment. That infuriated the soldiers and on May 10, the 3rd Cavalry regiment revolted. The infantry also joined them. The soldiers killed many British officers and civilians, released the prisoners and left for Delhi. Delhi was captured by the rebels on May 12 and Bahadur Shah was declared the Emperor of India. Revolts then occurred at Muzaffarnagar and Firozepur as well and then, after a week, at many places in north India. Very soon the revolt covered the entire region from Delhi to Bihar in the

East. At Kanpur, Nana Sahib headed the rebels, at Lucknow begum Hazrat Mahal provided leadership to them and, at Jhansi, *Rani* Lakshmi Bai revolted. The people participated in the revolt in a large number at Muzzafarnagar, Saharanpur, Bulandsahar, Delhi, Bareilly, Farrukhabad, Bijnor, Sahajahanpur, Badayun, Aligarh, Agra, Mathura, Banda, Hamirpur, Jhansi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Gorakhpur and several other places in Bihar. Many among them fought in genuine sympathy of the rebel soldiers, many found it a good opportunity to burn up the papers of their landlords and money-lenders. Many of them, whose titles and pensions were abolished by the British found in it an opportunity to take their revenge and, yet, many others participated in it simply for plunder. The Muslim leaders and religious preachers saw in it the opportunity of establishing the Muslim rule in India. In Punjab, the British succeeded in disarming the Indian soldiers. The soldiers revolted at some places in Rajasthan and Indore as well, but they were easily suppressed. In south India, the soldiers revolted at some places but their attempts at Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Sindh, etc. met with failure. No native ruler participated in the revolt. On the contrary, some rulers in Punjab, Rajasthan and south India helped the British in suppressing the revolt. Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi and Gwalior remained the centres of the revolt.

Lord Canning, the governor-general took immediate steps to suppress the revolt. He called forth the forces from Madras, Bombay, Sri Lanka and Burma, along with the British army deputed in China and Calcutta and ordered the loyal Sikh army to attack Delhi. It resulted in quick success for the British. Nana Sahib had declared himself *Peshwa* at Kanpur. The rebel army of Gwalior also joined him. Yet, he was defeated and Sir Campbell captured Kanpur on 6th December and Nana Sahib fled away. In March, 1858 the British captured Lucknow and *Begum* Hazrat Mahal fled the place. The British had captured Delhi in September 1857 itself. Two sons of Bahadur Shah were killed while he himself was deported to Rangoon as a prisoner. Sir Hugh Rose occupied Jhansi. *Rani* Lakshmi Bai fled from Jhansi and joined hands with Tantya Tope who was fighting on behalf of Nana Sahib and had taken over the leadership of the army of the rebels at Gwalior. But the British captured Gwalior in June 1858. The *Rani* died fighting while Tantya Tope fled but, later on, was captured and executed. The revolt of Khan Bahadur Khan at Bareilly and that of Kanwar Singh at Jagdishpur in Bihar were also suppressed. Nana Sahib and *Begum* Hazrat Mahal fled, probably, to Nepal. Some local uprisings continued for some time but, by July 1858, everything was over.

The worst feature of the revolt had been that both the English and the Indians committed barbaric atrocities against one another and innocent people from both sides became their victims. These atrocities began at Meerut when the rebel soldiers killed English men, women and children. The story was repeated at Delhi. Innocent

English men, women and children were massacred at the *Sati Chaura Ghat* at Kanpur by the soldiers of Nana Sahib. The English retaliated with vengeance. General Neill massacred thousands of innocent men, women and children on his way from Banaras to Allahabad. General Havelock did the same en route. The British took their brutal revenge on the people of Delhi after they had occupied it. The citizens at Lucknow and Jhansi were treated in the same way. The British imposed martial law at many places, punished the people by hanging them from the trees or shooting them straightaway.

Points to Remember

1. A low-caste *Khalasi* at the ordnance factory of Dum Dum near Calcutta told a *Brahmana* soldier that the fat of the cow and the pig has been used in preparing the catridges for the newly introduced rifles.
2. The soldier conveyed this news to his fellow-soldiers, and they felt that the British were attempting to defile their caste and religion.
3. The solidiers of the 19th regiment at Barrackpur refused to use those catridges and later on Mangal Pandey of the 34th regiment asked his fellow-soldiers to revolt and fired at his office. Mangal Pandey was executed and both the regiments were disbanded.
4. Soldiers at Ambala and Lucknow also refused to use those catridges and the Lucknow regiment was disbanded.
5. Soldiers were simply refusing to use the new catridges and they had no idea of revolt while the British refuted the story of the use of the fat of cow and pig and insisted for the use of those catridges.
6. On April 24, 85 soldiers of 3rd cavalry at Meerut refused to use the catridges for which they were punished and paraded naked before their fellow-soldiers on 9th May, 1857.
7. That infuriated the soldiers who revolted on 10th May and after killing British soldiers and civilians, left lor Delhi where they declared the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah as the emperor of India.
8. Very soon, the revolt covered the entire territory from Delhi to Bihar though its main centres remained Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi and Gwalior.
9. Nana Saheb headed the rebels at Kanpur, *Begum* Hazrat Mahal at Lucknow, *Rani* Lakshmi Bai at Jhansi while Tantya Tope became a famous leader of the rebels while fighting on behalf of Nana Saheb.
10. People also joined the revolt in a large number though many of them participated in it for serving their narrow selfish interests.

11. The muslim leaders and preachers saw in it a good opportunity for establishing muslim rule in India.
12. The attempts of soldiers to revolt at some places in Rajasthan, Punjab and south India were foiled.
13. No native ruler participated in the revolt, rather, on the contrary, some rulers in Punjab, Rajasthan and south India helped the British in suppressing it.
14. Lord Canning took immediate steps to suppress the revolt and succeeded so much so that by July 1858, everything was over.
15. Very soon, the British captured Delhi and then, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi, Gwalior, etc.
16. Bahadur Shah was deported to Rangoon, *Rani* Lakshmi Bai died fighting, Tantya Tope was captured and executed while *Begum* Hazrat Mahal and Nana Saheb fled away, probably, to Nepal.
17. The worst feature of the revolt was that both the British and the Indians committed barbaric atrocities against each other at several places.

Q. 5. Discuss the causes of the failure of the revolt of 1857.

When the revolt started, the Indian soldiers outnumbered the British soldiers by seven to one. They were supported by the citizens as well in a large number. The rebels captured Delhi at the very initial stage of the revolt and disrupted the communications between Delhi and Calcutta. Thus, in the beginning, the British were at a very disadvantageous position. Yet, they succeeded in suppressing the revolt very soon.

There were many causes accountable for the failure of the revolt. The area of the revolt remained limited. South India did not participate in the revolt while, in the North, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Kashmir. region in the north-west, Madhya Bharat, Bengal, Assam and Orissa remained aloof from it. The revolt, thus, remained limited to Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh, Avadh, Bihar, Rohelkhand and their neighbouring territories. Therefore, the British were not forced to divide their strength in different parts of India and were able to concentrate their resources against the rebels in the limited area.

Many native rulers supported the British while none fought against them. The rulers of Patiala, Jind, Gwalior and Hyderabad helped the British in all possible ways. The king of Nepal also gave all possible assistance to the British and sent its army to help the British. It came as a very useful help to the British. Had the native rulers, instead of supporting the British, decided to help the rebels, the fate of the British would have been, probably, different.

Educated Indians, who could be helpful in organising the revolt or could provide intellectual leadership to it, were opposed to it and kept themselves away from it.

The British had superior arms and intelligence set-up as compared to the rebels. Of course, initially, the rebels outnumbered the British. But very soon the British increased their strength. Nearly 1,12,000 British soldiers were brought to India and nearly 3,10,000 Indians were recruited as soldiers afresh. The British used newly introduced rifles while the rebels were equipped mostly with swords and spears. The British possessed a good artillery while the rebels either lacked it or failed to utilise it properly in the battlefield. The newly introduced telegraph system helped the British in getting information concerning the movements of the rebels and also in keeping contact among themselves.

Another important cause of the failure of the revolt was lack of planned efforts, absence of central organisation and inferiority of generalship, strategy, military skill and discipline among the rebels as compared to the British. The revolt was never organised under one leadership. The different leaders of the revolt even did not coordinate their efforts. Each of them was a leader in his or her region. On the contrary, the British acted under one command, one direction and one fixed object. The events during the revolt proved it. Delhi was a fortified city and its fort was strong, yet the British captured it within four months. At Kanpur, nearly four hundred British soldiers, some civilians and some Indian soldiers defended themselves for twenty days from the invading force of three thousand well-armed soldiers under Nana Saheb without having a well-protected place and surrendered only when they were assured of their safety, though they were killed treacherously afterwards. At Arrah, Kanwar Singh commanded nearly two thousand soldiers and nearly four times as many insurgents, yet failed to get the surrender of nearly fifty Sikh and fifteen British soldiers who were defending themselves in a small building. The same way, at Lucknow, the British defended themselves against a force of rebels which was many times more than theirs. On the contrary, the British proved better in command and strategy. When Hugh Rose attacked Jhansi with two thousand soldiers, there were one thousand five hundred regular soldiers and nearly ten thousand newly recruited soldiers in the fort. The same time Tantya Tope came to the relief of the fort with nearly twenty thousand soldiers. Sir Hugh Rose left behind one thousand soldiers to continue the siege and attacked Tantya Tope with the remaining one thousand soldiers. Surprisingly, neither Tantya Tope could win the battle against a small British force nor the soldiers in the fort dared making an offensive attack on the small force besieging the fort. The result was that Jhansi was taken over by the British and *Rani* Lakshmi Bai had to flee the fort. Havelock also defeated Nana Saheb who commanded a larger force than his own and captured Kanpur. Tantya Tope and *Rani* Lakshmi Bai got the possession of the strong fort of Gwalior because of the rebellion of its army but they lost it to the British without any serious resistance. All such events prove that the British were superior to the rebels in fighting skill.

One primary cause of the failure of the revolt was the absence of a capable leader among the rebels. Nana Saheb, Tantya Tope, Bahadur Shah, *Rani* Lakshmi Bai, and Kanwar Singh have been regarded as the leaders of the revolt. But none of them was either a good organiser or a capable commander. Nana Saheb did not organise the revolt, was motivated by selfish ends and was no commander at all. Shah Alam, the Mughal emperor was worse than him. He was forced to be a party to the revolt. He was always in secret correspondence with the British. He failed to maintain discipline among the rebels and even could not check them when they looted the citizens of Delhi. His wife, *Begum* Zinat Mahal and his *Wazir* Asanullah were also in league with the British. Tantya Tope and Kanwar Singh, of course, were courageous fighters but no good military commanders while *Rani* Lakshmi Bai, though superior to them all in determination, daring and heroism, was neither a shrewd politician nor a capable military commander. She became famous because of her personal virtues. Thus, we find that there was no political or military leader of a high calibre among the rebels who would have united them as one effective fighting force leading to success.

Another cause of the failure of the rebels was lack of any inspiring ideal among them. Nationalism and patriotism were certainly absent. And, what to say of any other high ideal, even safety of their religion, which had sparked the revolt, no more remained their ideal. Therefore, they did not remain united, On the contrary, as the time passed, mutual suspicion, conflicts, differences of religion and region and selfish interests went on increasing. That weakened the rebels.

On the contrary, the British proved superior to the rebels in every field. They fought for the safety of their Empire and to take the revenge on the murderers of their wives and children. Havelock, Neil, Hugh Rose and Nicolson, certainly, proved good military commanders. Besides, diplomatic skill of the British became an important factor in their success. They could get the support of the Afghans and the tribes in the north-west. They could command the loyalty of the Sikh army, though they had annexed Punjab only ten years back. They could command the loyalty of Sindhia who was disregarded by Lord Ellenborough in 1843-44 and also the support of the *Nizam* of Hyderabad from whom the English had snatched Berar in 1853. The king of Nepal also supported the British. All this was because of the successful dealing of the British with the natives.

Thus, several factors led to the failure of the revolt of 1857. Of course, it was the first attempt of the Indians which seriously threatened the supremacy of the British in India. But its failure was ignominious and brought additional miseries to the Indian people. However, it indirectly brought about some fruitful results. The revolt, certainly, inspired the future Indian revolutionaries and

nationalists. Of course, the leaders of the revolt were no national leaders, they became famous as such and the Indians remembered them as heroes of their struggle against the British. Therefore, the revolt also provoked the Indians to feel at one with themselves and, thus, helped in building up Indian nationalism afterwards.

Points to Remember

1. The mutineers enjoyed the advantage of having the support of a large majority of the Indian soldiers and of capturing Delhi in the very beginning, yet they failed because of several reasons.
2. The area of the revolt remained limited.
3. Gradually the number of British soldiers increased.
4. The British had better arms including the artillery.
5. The telegraph proved very much useful for the English.
6. Many native rulers supported the English.
7. The educated Indians did not support the rebels.
8. Lack of planned efforts, absence of central organisation, inferiority in strategy, military skill and discipline among the rebels made them weaker as compared to the English.
9. Absence of a capable leader was primary cause of the failure of the revolt.
10. Lack of an inspiring ideal among the rebels was also one of the causes of the failure of the rebels.
11. The spirit of nationalism, determined leadership, diplomatic skill, better communication and better espionage network of of the English were also largely responsible for the defeat of the rebels.

Q. 6. What were the consequences of the revolt of 1857 ?

Or

Do you think that the revolt of 1857 brought about some changes in British attitudes and policies in India ?

The revolt of 1857 marked the close of an era and the beginning of a new one in the history of British rule in India. It resulted in significant changes in the administrative structure of Britain for Indian affairs, policies of the government of India and the British attitudes.

By the Queen's proclamation on November 1, 1858, the administration of India was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown. The Court of Directors was replaced by the India Council headed by the Secretary of State for India who was the member of the British Cabinet.

The policy of territorial extension was abandoned by the

British and the native rulers were assured of the safety of their territories, honour and rights. The right of a native ruler to adopting a child in absence of a natural heir was also accepted by the British. The *Taluqdars* of Avadh were also restored to their lands. The British felt that the native rulers and the landed aristocracy would prove to be strong pillars of the Empire. It, therefore, became a part of their policy that all conservative and reactionary forces in the Indian society were to be protected by the government to serve as a bulwark against the people. At the same time, the theory of "One Charge", that is, India was to be treated as one political unit for administrative purposes and the Crown of England was the unquestioned ruler of India was frankly asserted and implemented.

The British encouraged caste, regional and communal distinctions of the Indians. 'Divide and Rule' became an important part of their policies. Of course, after the revolt the British despised the Muslims because the revolt was provided leadership by king Bahadur Shah in name at least. But, later on, when they became suspicious of the rise of nationalism among the Hindus, they started patronizing the Muslims against the Hindus. The same way, they tried to divide the Hindus and the Sikhs as well.

The organisation of the Indian army was also transformed. The proportion of the British soldiers was increased and the best arms were provided to them. Besides, the Indians were divided into martial and non-martial races and regiments were raised on caste, religions or regional basis, *viz.*, the Sikh regiment, the Jat regiment, the Gurkha regiment, etc.

The monopoly of the British over high civil services was also kept intact. The Indian Civil Service Act of 1861, no doubt, provided for an annual competitive examination for recruitment to the covenanted Civil Service. But the venue of examination was kept in London. Besides, the rules concerning it were so framed that the Indians were virtually kept aloof from the Services for a long time to come.

Economic exploitation of the Indians increased further after the revolt. Of course, certain beneficial measures like development of transport and communication, irrigation and agriculture, sanitation, etc. were attempted by the British, but the motive of economic profit was never lost sight of by the British.

The period after the revolt was marked with intensification of racial hatred and bitterness, particularly on behalf of the British. According to Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad, 'detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance' became marked features of the English character in India. The Indians, on their part, remained hostile towards their rulers for many years to come.

The attitude to rule India by sword, that is, by power became predominant and continued to affect the policies of the government of India for many many years. All social and educational reform

policies were abandoned by the British. Even the education of English was neglected because that could enlighten the Indians which, ultimately, could harm the Imperial interests. On the contrary, orthodoxy, religious superstitions and caste, communal and regional differences were encouraged. Of course, it was realized that lack of contact between the rulers and the ruled was harmful to the Imperial interest and, therefore, a beginning was made towards the development of representative institutions by the Indian Council's Act of 1861. But, it was not with the purpose of educating the Indians in the working of representative institutions but to devise a way for establishing the British rule permanently in India. The entire structure of Indian administration was so modelled that it might ensure the perpetuation of the British rule.

Points to Remember

1. The revolt of 1857 resulted in significant changes in administrative structure in Britain, policies of the Government of India and the British attitude.
2. The British Crown took over the administration of India from the hands of the Company.
3. The Court of Directors was replaced by the Indian Council headed by the Secretary of State for India.
4. The policy of territorial extension was abandoned by the British and the native rulers were assured of the safety of their states, honour, rights including the right to adopt their heirs.
5. The theory of 'One Charge' was propounded and implemented.
6. The number of British soldiers was increased in the army while in the case of Indian soldiers the policy of counter-poise of natives against natives was pursued.
7. The monopoly of higher services by the Englishmen was kept intact.
8. The racial attitude of the English became more arrogant and bitter.
9. The policy of social and educational reforms was abandoned and, on the contrary, orthodoxy, religious superstitions, caste system and communal and regional differences were encouraged.
10. Indians were exploited further economically because henceforth instead of the Company, the economic interests of the entire British nation were to be safeguarded at the cost of India.

Q. 7. Discuss the nature of the Revolt of 1857.

Or

Do you think that the Revolt of 1857 was the First War of Indian Independence ?

Historians have expressed divergent views about the nature of

the revolt of 1857. Sir John Lawrence and Seeley described it as the mutiny of the sepoys only in which the civilian population did not participate. But this view has not been accepted by the majority of historians. They have argued that the revolt was started by the Indian soldiers. But all Indian soldiers were not a party to it. A large number of Indian soldiers fought from the side of the British. Besides, a large number of civilians supported the revolting soldiers. Therefore, the revolt was neither a part of all the Indian soldiers nor was simply confined to them. L.E.R. Reese described the revolt as 'a religious war against the Christians'. But this opinion too has been overthrown. One of the causes of the revolt was, certainly, religious. But the Indians did not revolt to uproot the Christianity but to defend their own religion. Equally untenable is the view expressed by some historians that 'the revolt was a conflict between the black and white races.' Certainly, all whites were on one side but all the blacks were not on the other side. Many blacks fought from the side of the British. In fact, for every white man in the camp there were certainly twenty black ones.' T. R. Holmes and some other English historians described the revolt as 'a conflict between civilization and barbarism'. But this view is also not tenable. The atrocities were committed, both by the English and the Indians against one another during the revolt. James Outrom W. Taylor and some other British historians described the revolt as the conspiracy of the Hindus and the Muslims against the British'. This view too has been rejected by the majority of historians. It has been mostly accepted by modern historians that the revolt was not the result of an organised conspiracy. Besides, the Hindus and the Muslims developed serious differences among themselves during the revolt and failed to put up a united front against the British. Therefore, the revolt cannot be accepted as a united conspiracy of the Hindus and the Muslims against the British. Among Indian scholars, Ashoka Mehta, in his book entitled *The Great Rebellion* tried to prove that the revolt was national in character while Vir Savarkar described it as a Planned War of National Independence. But again, it is difficult to accept their views without reservations.

Recently two distinguished Indian historians, Dr. R. C. Mazumdar and Dr. S. N. Sen have made extensive researches on this subject. Both scholars have agreed on many facts and expressed similar opinions. Yet, they have differed in their conclusions. Both agree that the revolt was not pre-planned and no national sentiment existed among the Indians at that time. No leader of the revolt said anything at any place and at any time which could justify that they were inspired by national sentiment. Therefore, the revolt had no national character.

Yet, Dr. Sen contends that even in the absence of national feeling among the Indians, the revolt was a war of independence. He argues that in every revolution it is only the minority which is active with or without the popular support. It was the case with the French Revolution and American War of Independence. The same was the

case with the Indians during the revolt of 1857. Many Indians did not participate in it and many others actively supported the British. Therefore, the revolt cannot be accepted as a national uprising. Yet, it was a war of Indian independence because both the soldiers and the citizens, though only a minority among them, tried to turn out the English from the Indian soil. Dr. Sen writes : "The mutiny became a revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the king of Delhi and a section of landed aristocracy and civil population declared in his favour. What began as a fight for religion ended as a War of Independence."

On the contrary, Dr. R. C. Majumdar has refused to accept the revolt as a war of Indian Independence. He argues that while discussing the nature of the revolt the first question is, whether it was a revolt only of the soldiers or the civilians were also a party to it. He says that the revolt was sparked off by the soldiers and the civilians became a party to it only afterwards. He also says that it was not preplanned.

Another question concerning the revolt is, whether it was a national war. Dr. Majumdar says that it cannot be accepted as a national war because the revolt remained limited only to a part of India. Only the territory consisting of modern Uttar Pradesh and its neighbouring areas were the centres of the unrest. Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Rajasthan, Kashmir, north-west-frontier, larger part of Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and the territory south of the river Narmada remained unaffected by the revolt. Some native rulers like those of Patiala, Jind, Nabha and Bhopal and many *Taluqdars* and influential people in the society gave active support to the British in suppressing the revolt and many others remained indifferent to it. Except for the Bengal army, most of the native soldiers remained loyal to the British while the Sikhs and the Gurkhas provided positive support to them. The majority of the Indian people also exhibited no ill will towards the English. Many Indians provided shelter and security to the British citizens. The educated Indians were not a party to the revolt and, therefore, were objects of hatred of the mutineers. Many contemporary Indian writers expresssed the view that the citizens were tired of the mutineers. They suffered so much that they prayed to God for the reestablishment of the British rule. The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims also did not remain cordial during the period of the revolt. Of course, both fought together against the British. Yet, there was no such feeling among them which could be recognised as national feeling. On the contrary, both communities had serious doubts against each other's intentions. Besides, several Hindu-Muslim riots took place at several places like Bareilly, Bijnor, Moradabad, etc. The Indians, thus, were divided on the basis of religious differences. Thus, it is clear that the revolt was limited only to a part of India and even in that limited area, the mutineers were divided among themselves due to different factors. Therefore, Dr. Majumdar contends that it was not a national revolt.

Dr. Majumdar further argues that if it was not a national rising, can we accept it as a war of independence? He says that many scholars are prepared to accept every armed struggle of the Indians against the British as a freedom fight. But should we accept their view? If we accept their view, then the struggle of the Santhals, the Wahabis and many others against the English should also be accepted as freedom struggles. But, we do not accept them as such. It means that every struggle or fighting of the Indians against the British cannot be accepted as a war of independence. He argues that the only criterion of accepting a struggle of the natives against the foreigners as the war of independence is that it should be motivated simply by the desire of turning out the foreigners from their homeland. The revolt of 1857 was not fought on this basis. Even at the central places of the revolt many people were not in favour of the mutineers. The Hindus and the Muslims were not inspired to fight against the foreigners but to protect their respective religions. In fact, after the rising of the soldiers, the revolt was pursued simply to fulfil selfish interests of either the individuals or the groups. The events, during the period of the revolt, in no way prove that the aim of the mutineers was to turn out the foreigners from India and to gain independence.

Therefore, Dr. R. C. Majumdar has refused to accept the revolt of 1857 as the War of Indian Independence. He concludes: "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the so-called first National War of Independence of 1857 is neither first, nor national, nor a war of independence."

Points to Remember

1. Historians have expressed divergent views about the nature of the revolt.
2. It has been described as the 'Mutiny of the Sepoys, a religious war against the Christians', a 'War between the black and white races', etc., but these views have been rejected by modern historians.
3. However, even Dr. S. N. Sen and Dr. R. C. Majumdar who have done latest researches in this field have failed to be unanimous in their conclusion.
4. Both scholars have agreed on many facts, *e.g.*, the revolt was not organised, it had no national character, etc.
5. Yet, Dr. Sen says that it was a war of Indian Independence because both the soldiers and the citizens may be in minority, tried to turn out the English from India.
6. On the contrary, Dr. Majumdar says that as the revolt was limited only to a part of India, several native rulers supported the English, large number of Indian soldiers including the Sikhs and the Gurkhas remained loyal to the English, a large majority of the Indian people did not like it, the relations of the Hindus and the Muslims did not remain cordial and the mutineers mostly fought for their respective selfish interests, it was neither first, nor national, nor a war of independence.'

4

SOME OTHER IMPORTANT REVOLTS AFTER THE REVOLT OF 1857

Q. 1. Discuss the revolt of Birsa Munda, the Pabna Revolt, the Indigo movement, the Deccan riots and Moplah Uprisings.

The revolts of tribals and peasants took place even after the revolt of 1857. In A.D. 1879 the tribals in the Rampa hills on the coastal region of Andhra revolted against the encroachment on their lands and the new forest laws. The revolt could be suppressed after a year with the help of the army. The tribals revolted at other places also. One such revolt was that of Birsa Munda.

(a) *The Revolt of Birsa Munda*: In 1899-1900, the Mundas again revolted in the region south of Ranchi under the leadership of Birsa who was the son of a share-cropper. The Mundas were aggrieved by the encroachment on their lands by the merchants and money-lenders coming from the northern plains. These outsiders grabbed their lands and imposed forced labour on them. The Mundas filed a legal petition with the government but no relief was provided to them. Birsa Munda, one among them, claimed to be the messenger of God and promised that he would eliminate all sufferings of the Mundas. He was imprisoned for two years in 1895. After returning from imprisonment, he instigated the Mundas to fight against the British, the landlords, the money-lenders and the Christian missionaries. The Mundas called him Birsa *Bhagwan*. Subsequently, the Mundas revolted in 1899. The revolt could be suppressed only after a year. Birsa was captured and imprisoned where he died afterwards. The only useful result of the revolt was the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 which provided some relief to the local inhabitants.

(b) *The Pabna Revolt*: In 1870 and the early eighties the peasants of Pabna in East Bengal organised an agrarian league, held public meetings, withheld payment of revenue to local landlords and collected funds for litigation. The primary cause of the resentment of peasants was that the local landlords had raised the revenue arbitrarily. During the next decade the movement of 'no payment of revenue' spread to neighbouring districts like Dacca, Mymensingh, Tripura, Backergunj, Faridpur, etc. Except in cases when the landlords tried to collect the revenue by force, the movement mostly

remained within legal limits. Its net result was the Tenancy Act of 1885.

(c) *The Indigo Movement.* The cultivation of Indigo by the British on an organised basis goes back to the beginning of the 19th century. These British planters oppressed the peasants in many ways so that the condition of the cultivators had become worse than that of slaves. The Indigo Commission appointed by the government in 1860 reported that 'the cultivation of Indigo was not voluntary on the part of the cultivators ; the planters forced the cultivators to plant Indigo on their best lands ; the cultivators became indebted to the planters because of poor wages, false accounting, etc., and were obliged to bequeath their debts to their descendants which virtually reduced them to the position of slaves ; and, that the system was vicious in theory, injurious in practice and radically unsound.' Besides, the planters and their hired *gundas* used to dishonour their women-folk as well. The oppression of the cultivators by the planters was brought to light several times by the newspaper, *Hindoo Patriot* and a drama, *Nil-darpana.* Yet, all these atrocities were continued by the British planters. The government took no notice of the sufferings of Indigo cultivators. On the contrary, the government passed a law in 1830 which 'made cultivators liable to prosecution and penal consequences who broke Indigo contracts ? The Act was repealed in 1835 yet, in practice, it was enforced.

Some individuals took up the cause of the cultivators and gave publicity to the cruelties of the planters. Harish Chandra Mukherji, the editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* and Sisir Kumar Ghosh, the founder-editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* gave publicity to these cruelties in their newspapers while Rama Gopal Ghose described them in his book. Their efforts provoked sympathy for the cultivators, yet no attempt was made by anyone for safeguarding the interests of the cultivators.

However, the cause of the cultivators was, finally, taken up by Bishnu Charan Biswas and Digambar Biswas of Chaugacha village in the district of Nadia. Both served in the plantations as *dewans* but resigned their posts when they saw the sufferings of the cultivators. They decided to organise a passive resistance against the planters. They made the cultivators of their own village to take the vow of never planting Indigo. One more village took a similar vow. As a repurcussion to it, the planters attacked a village and completely destroyed it. They filed a case in the court as well. But the two Biswas paid the entire decreed amount fixed by the court, took measures to safeguard women and children and also to fight back the planters. Their courage brought fruitful results. More and more villagers were attracted towards the movement. Within two years the vow of 'no cultivation of Indigo' was taken by many cultivators in many districts. Then a conference of the representatives of ninety-two villages was held at Jayarampur at the instance of Sisir Kumar Ghose. They took a vow to refuse

cultivation of Indigo even at the risk of their lives. Within two years (1858-60), the movement of 'no-cultivation of Indigo' spread to several districts. The attempt of the planters to check the movement by force failed. Both the rival groups sent representations to the government. The government agreed to appoint a commission of inquiry. The Commission submitted its report in August 1870 and suggested certain remedial measures. But the cultivators refused to work on plantations. It resulted in elimination of the cultivation of Indigo in Bengal.

The Indigo cultivation, however, continued in Bihar for nearly half a century more. The story of Bengal was repeated there too in 1867-68. Some remedial measures were then taken. In 1917, Gandhiji had to go to Champaran. There he led the movement of Indigo cultivators. He succeeded in removing some worst evils attached to Indigo plantation.

(d) *The Deccan Riots*: The Deccan riots in Maharashtra occurred primarily because of the oppression of the local money-lenders called *Sahukars*. Yet, the root cause of the trouble was the heavy assessment of land revenue by the government which had resulted in indebtedness of the cultivators. The *Sahukars* provided loans to the cultivators on heavy interests and also cheated them otherwise. It resulted mostly in the appropriation of lands of the cultivators by the *Sahukars*. Some *Sahukars* even compelled the debtor-peasants to compromise the honour of their females to get relief from the crushing debt.

The peasants first revolted in A.D. 1874 at village Kardeh in the district of Poona. A local *Sahukar* took possession of the house of a respectable villager on the strength of a mortgage decree. The villagers resented it and declared a social and economic boycott of the *Marwaris*. They refused to do any service for them and threw filth in their premises. The *Marwaris* left the village. The story was repeated in several other villages. But it was bound to result in violence. The first violent incident took place at Supa village in the district of Poona on May 12, 1875. The mob looted the shops and houses of some Gujrati *Sahukars*. This was followed by similar incidents in many other villages in Poona and Ahmadnagar districts. Serious disturbances took place in nearly thirty-three villages. These disturbances continued for several months but were finally suppressed with the help of the police and the army.

(e) *Moplah Uprisings*: In Malabar, the cultivators were mostly Muslims, called the Moplahs. The population of the Moplahs had increased by natural process and also because of large-scale voluntary conversions of Hindu untouchables to Islam. Being uneducated and ignorant the Moplahs had developed religious fanaticism. Their communal solidarity was strengthened by the leadership provided to them by Syed Alawi and his son, Syed Fedl from 1852 onwards. It was further enhanced by historical and economic circumstances. The Moplahs disliked the Whites since the Portuguese had come to Mala-

bar and attempted forceful conversion to Christianity. So, they were suspicious of the English as well. However, their primary grievance was economic. In Malabar, mostly the upper-caste Hindus were landlords and money-lenders. The Moplah cultivators were indebted to them. The laws of the English government supported the rights of the money-lenders and the landlords. Therefore, the Moplah cultivators suffered economically. They, therefore, adopted violent means to get redress and attacked the landlords, the money-lenders and the government officials who supported them. Between 1836-54, they revolted twenty times, repeating the insurrection several times between 1882-85 and in 1896 and the disturbances continued casually till 1919. The Moplahs, however, could not unite themselves under a central organisation and so there was no general insurrection. Their uprising mostly took the form of attacks on properties and lives of Hindu landlords and money-lenders and desecration of Hindu temples by small bands of Moplahs. The number of Moplah activitists also remained very small; they functioned as individuals or group terrorists.

The Moplah uprisings were treated as Muslim uprisings against the Hindus because the Moplahs were Muslims and their targets were mostly Hindu landlords and money-lenders though, in fact, the primary cause of their uprisings was economic.

Points to Remember

1. Several revolts occurred even after the revolt of 1857.
2. The Mundas revolted in the region south of Ranchi under the leadership of Birsa Munda in 1899-1900.
3. The Mundas were troubled by marchants and money-lenders who encroached on their lands and exploited them in many ways.
4. The government did nothing to protect the interests of the Mundas.
5. Birsa Munda promised them all relief and instigated them to fight against the government, landlords, money-lenders, and missionaries.
6. He was called Birsa *Bhagwan* by the Mundas.
7. He was captured and imprisoned where he died.
8. However, it resulted in passing of the Chota-Nagpur-Tenancy Act of 1908.
9. The peasants of Pabna in East Bengal organised a movement against enhancement of revenue by the local landlords and refused to pay it.
10. The movement of non-payment of revenue spread to many districts.
11. It's net result was the Tenancy Act of 1885.
12. The Indigo cultivators in Bengal suffered miserably because of the exploitation of the British planters.

13. It was brought to notice by the newspaper, *Hindoo-Patriot* and the drama, *Nil-Darpana.*
14. The Indigo Commission in 1860 accepted that all sorts of oppression was done to the cultivators, yet, the government did nothing to remove it.
15. Some newspapers and individuals published the sufferings of the Indigo cultivators but with no useful result.
16. Finally, the cause of the cultivators was taken over by Bishnu Charan Biswas and Digambar Biswas who advised them not to cultivate Indigo at any cost.
17. Within two years (1858-60), the movement of 'no cultivation of Indigo' was taken up by cultivators in many districts.
18. The attempt of the planters to check the movement by force failed.
19. It resulted in elimination of the cultivation of Indigo in Bengal though it continued in Bihar.
20. In Maharashtra, revolt of the peasants called the Deccan Riots occurred primarily because of the oppression of the local *Marwari Sahukars.*
21. The peasants first revolted in 1874 at village Kardeh in the Poona district when a *Sahukar* occupied the house of a respectable villager.
22. The villagers declared a social and economic boycott of the Marwaris and, thus, the *Marwaris* were forced to leave the village.
23. However, a violent revolt occurred in Supa village where the property of the *Marwaris* was looted.
24. Violent incidents occurred in nearly thirty-three villages in the districts of Poona and Ahmadnagar.
25. The movement could be suppressed with the help of the army.
26. In Malabar, the muslims called the Moplahs were mostly cultivators and fanatic in matters of religion while the landlords and the money-lenders were the Hindus.
27. Their fanaticism was incensed by Syed Alawi and his son Syed Fedl and also by certain historical and economic circumstances.
28. The Moplahs hated the Hindu money-lenders because they owed money to them and hated the English because their laws supported the money-lenders.
29. Therefore, there occurred several violent revolts against the landlords and the money-lenders who were mostly Hindus.
30. Therefore, the Moplah-rebellions were treated as communal uprisings though, in fact, their primary cause was economic.
31. The Moplahs had no central organisation and worked as individuals or isolated groups.
32. Their all movements failed.

5

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS OF THE 19th CENTURY AND THEIR ROLE IN NATIONAL AWAKENING

Q. 1. What led to socio-religious movements in the 19th century in India ?

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Indian culture stood completely demoralized against the western culture. The educated Indians lost confidence in their own culture and regarded western culture as their ideal. They blindly imitated western dress, manners, literature, thought and everything else which belonged to the West. But, at the same time, a new thought-wave swept the minds of the Indians. It inspired them in every sphere of their life, *viz.*, society, religion, literature, fine arts, politics etc. The new thought-wave, the inspiration and emotions which it created and its resultant effects have been called as the Indian Renaissance. It was inspired by the western concepts of reason, equality and liberty. It inspired the Indians to remove the defects of their culture. It, thus, gave it a new lease of life and momentum to grow. The Indians felt that the Indian culture was great and it could grow and could face the challenge of the western culture. Therefore, they tried to revive the glory of the Indian culture, reform Indian society and religion and bring about improvement in every field of life. And the best results of their efforts were the social-religious movements of the 19th century.

Various factors contributed to the growth of Indian Renaissance which resulted in various social and religious movements. The British united larger part of India politically and administratively. It provided Indians with the opportunity to think about themselves and provoked them to find out the causes of their misery. The foreign contacts and the progress achieved in different countries inspired Indians to achieve similar progress for themselves. The propaganda carried out by Christian missionaries to make converts in India provoked both the Hindus and the Muslims into reinforcing their efforts to defend their religion and society. They also realised the necessity of bringing about desirable improvement therein. Certain western scholars like Max Muller and William Jones revived the past glory of Indian culture by their researches and writings. The Indians felt that their culture was in no way inferior to that of the

West and it needed only revival to stand upon or even surpass the western culture. The Indian press helped in propagation of these ideas. The introduction of the English language and the western education brought Indians in close contact with the western ideas of liberty, equality, nationalism, etc. It enlightened the English-educated Indians and provided them with clues for bringing forth progress in different spheres of Indian life, particularly in religion and society.

All religious communities in India including the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis etc. attempted to modernize and simplify their religion. The best attempt in this direction was made by the Hindus. The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission etc. aimed at reforming the Hindu religion and revive its past glory. Foreign scholars like Max Muller, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins etc. helped in reviving the past glory of India. They translated several religious texts of the Hindus and proved that these were among the best religious treaties of the world. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy drew inspiration from them and established 'Brahmo Samaj' to remove the evils of the Hindu religion. *Swami* Dayanand moved ahead and declared that the *Vedas* contained absolute and the only truth. *Swami* Vivekananda placed the Hindu religion on the high pedestal of spiritualism. These religious reformers attempted to reform the Hindu religion, established faith among the Hindus and gave the message of Hinduism and its spirituality even to the world. It strengthened the Hindu religion. The same was done by the Aligarh Movement for the Muslims.

The religious movements of the nineteenth century were not limited to religious reforms only. Each of them made concerted efforts to rid the society of its evils as well. Among the Hindus, many social evils were defended as religious practices so that common man did not dare to break them while none of these practices had any thing to do with religion. All religious reformers of this century led a crusade against these social evils. 'The Brahmo Samaj', 'The Arya Samaj', 'The Ramakrishna Mission', 'The Theosophical Society' etc. preached against caste-system, child-marriage, practice of *Sati*, infanticide, untouchability, marriage of minor girls, *Purdah* system etc. There remained no social evil which was not openly condemned and discarded by these religious societies and their leaders. They also took positive measures against these evils. They encouraged intercaste marriages and interdining, arranged marriages of the widows, opened girl-schools, emphasized equality of the female with the male and the 'Arya Samaj' even carried on *Shuddhi* Movement and brought back a large number of converted Muslims and Christians to the Hindu fold. Most of those social evils which have been discarded by the Hindu society and declared illegal by the government now, were attacked by the social and religious reformers in the 19th century.

The Muslims, too, took up modern education and tried to

remove some pernicious evils of their society. And similarly it was attempted by other religious communities in India. All this helped in improving the Indian society as a whole.

Points to Remember

1. By the beginning of the 19th century, the Indian culture stood completely demoralised before the western culture.
2. However, a new thought-wave also swept the minds of the Indians which led to Indian Renaissance.
3. It's primary reasons were the western concepts of reason, equality and liberty.
4. The political slavery and the economic misery suffered under the British rule by the Indians, the necessity of defending their religion and society against the onslaughts of Christian missionaries, the enlightenment provided by western education, English language and contacts with the western world which provoked them to remove their weakness in several spheres of life and writings and researches of certain western scholars like Max Muller and William Jones which revived their faith in the Indian culture led to Indian Renaissance and it's offshoots, the social and religious movements in the 19th century.
5. All religious communities in India including the Hindus, Christians, Parsis, etc. attempted to modernize and simplify their religion.
6. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy established 'Brahmo Samaj', *Swami* Dayanand established 'Arya Samaj' and *Swami* Vivekananda established 'Ram Krishna Mission'.
7. They strengthened Hindu religion by reforming it and even gave the message of spirituality to western world as well.
8. The religious reformers attacked all social evils of the Hindu society as well and, thus, attempted to reform it.
9. The other communities including the Muslims also received modern education and attempted to reform their respective religion and society.

Q. 2. Give a brief account of the social and religious ideas of Ram Mohan Roy

Or

Describe the contribution of Brahmo Samaj towards social and religious reforms in India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Brahmo Samaj on August 20, 1828 at Calcutta. He was born in A.D. 1774 at Radhanagar, a small village in Bengal. He learnt many languages. He also studied several religious philosophies like those of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sufism etc. He was deeply influenced by English language and western culture and travelled to England. His primary aim was to reform Hindu society and religion. He believed in the

divinity of one God and was against idol-worship, ritualism and blind faith. He gave his message to the people through his talks, discussions, articles and books. He established the Brahmo Samaj for the same purpose. He had to struggle hard against orthodox Hindus and fanatic Christian missionaries who challenged his views.

After the death of *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy, the Brahmo Samaj gradually came to be divided into several sects. *Maharishi* Devendranath Tagore established the 'Adi Brahmo Samaj', Keshab Chandra Sen established the '*Bharatiya* Brahmo Samaj' and yet another one was established by the name of '*Sadharana* Brahmo Samaj.' All these different organisations differed with one another only in matters of detail but the main source of inspiration of all remained the principles of the Brahmo Samaj established by *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy. Each of them attempted to reform the Hindu religion and, though being influenced by western culture, kept faith in the Hindu religious texts, particularly in the *Vedas*.

The Brahmo Samaj was the result of the first creative activity of the Indians inspired by Indian Renaissance. Hinduism and Hindu society was in a bad shape at that time. The Hindus had forgotten their true religion. Its place was taken over by ritualism and blind faith. The society too suffered from several serious evils. Christian missionaries took advantage of this situation, propagated against Hinduism and drew converts in large numbers. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj took up the cause of Hindu religion and society, attempted to reform them, asserted equality for Hindu religion with other religions on the basis of the philosophy of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* and, thus, met the onslaught of Christianity. The Hindus, thereby, felt confident about their religion and society, understood them better, developed faith in them and were inspired to remove their shortcomings.

The Brahmo Samaj accelerated new life to Indian society in all its spheres. On the basis of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, it preached that God was one, every religion possessed truth ; idol-worship and ritualism were useless and social evils had no connection with religion. It interpreted religion with reason and logic and was the first in India to do so. It pursued reason on its rightful course and, therefore, its aggressive sect, the *Sadharana* Brahmo Samaj refused to accept even the *Vedas* as the last word of God. It also attacked the ritualism of Christianity and refused to accept Christ as the incarnation of God. Both *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen debated with Christian missionaries on these points. This succeeded in checking the mad race of the people in Bengal towards conversion to Christianity. It also succeeded in checking many social evils and placing the Hindu society on the threshold of modern age. There is truth in the observation that the Brahmo Samaj was influenced by Christianity but it is also correct to say that its source of inspiration was not Christianity but the ancient Hindu religious texts. The Brahmo Samaj was also benefited by western concepts of liberty of thought, reason and innovation in society and religion. It, therefore,

criticised the prevalent social and religious practices of the Hindus but justified its arguments on the basis of Hindu religious texts. Its approach was also not that of reproach but of reformist zeal. It, thus, simplified and modernized Hindu religion. It led the first movement which fought the evil practices of Hindu society and religion and paved the way for the emergence of other social and religious reform movements among the Hindus.

The Brahmo Samaj attempted to reform Hindu society as well. There remained not a single evil which it spared from its attack. All those social evils which have been decried by educated Indians and national leaders in modern times were first attacked by *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj led a crusade against the practice of *Sati,* polygamy, child marriage, marriages of minor girls, caste-system, *Purdah* system, untouchability and use of intoxicants. It adopted intercaste marriages, education of women, widow remarriages etc. as practical measures for removing the social evils. It succeeded in creating a general awakening against these social evils in Bengal.

The Brahmo Samaj adopted all possible means to propagate its religious and social ideas. It established societies and educational institutions, started publishing newspapers and magazines, entered into debate with its opponents and arranged for lectures and tours of its members to come in direct contact with the people. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy supported the cause of English language and western system of education. He started the English School, the Hindu College and the *Vedanta* College at Calcutta.

The main scope of the activities of the Brahmo Samaj, of course, remained confined to Bengal. But its branches were established in distant provinces like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madras. Besides, it inspired the people in other provinces to pursue the goals which it was pursuing itself in Bengal. The *Prarthana Samaj* at Bombay was the result of its inspiration. It did the same work in Maharashtra which the Brahmo Samaj was performing in Bengal. It established the 'Widow Remarriage Society,' the 'Deccan Education Society' and 'The Depressed Classes Mission' in Maharashtra which carried on the social and religious reform movement in Maharashtra.

The leaders of the Brahmo Samaj also worked for the welfare of the peasants, liberty of the Press, social legislation, etc. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy wanted the revenue to be fixed with the cultivators in Bengal as was the case with the *Zamindars* and supported the cause of abolishing *Sati System* legally. Thus, the Brahmo Samaj worked as a pioneer in revitalising the Hindu society in discarding all its social evils and working in practice against them. It paved the way on which other Hindu social and religious reformers could tread.

The Brahmo Samaj also participated in building national sentiment among the Indians. It glorified the ancient culture of India, helped in developing confidence among Indians in their own religion and, thus, participated indirectly in the resurgence of Indian

nationalism. Keshab Chandra Sen was the first Indian who attempted to reform the society on all-India basis. Taking example from him Surendra Nath Banerjee was the first one who took up his political movement on all-India basis. Shiv Nath Sastri included the welfare of India and its people in the prayer of the *Sadharana* Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj did not participate in the building up of national feeling directly but certainly inspired many Indians towards it.

Thus, the Brahmo Samaj helped in social and religious reforms in India. It also helped in modernizing India. It placed before the Indian people the problems concerning their society and religion and also put forth their solutions. It, thus, generated an intellectual awakening among them. The Indians picked up its spirit of reform and reason and gradually broke themselves free of the tentacles of western culture and proceeded ahead confidently towards bringing about improvement in their society and religion on the basis of their own deep-rooted culture. It therefore led to more aggressive reform movements in India. That is why, *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy has been regarded as the pioneer of modern India. He and his Brahmo Samaj did a lot towards rousing social, religious and political awakening in India.

Points to Remember

1. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy studied several religious philosophies, was influenced by English language and western culture, believed in the divinity of ONE God, was against idol-worship, ritualism and blind faith, propagated his ideas through talks, discussions, articles and books and established the 'Brahmo Samaj' in 1828 for the same purpose.
2. Afterwards, 'Brahmo Samaj' was divided into several sects like '*Adi* Brahmo Samaj', "*Bhartiya* Brahmo Samaj' and "*Sadharana* Brahmo Samaj' though each of them remained loyal to basic principles of 'Brahmo Samaj.
3. 'Brahmo Samaj' took up the cause of Hindu religion and society, attempted to reform them, asserted equality for Hindu religion with other religions on the basis of the philosophy of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* and, thus, met the onslaught of Christianity which was drawing lot of converts.
4. 'Brahmo Samaj' interpreted religion with reason and logic, preached that God was one, every religion possessed truth, idol-worship and ritualism were useless and social evils had no connection with religion.
5. It succeeded in checking the mad race of the people in Bengal towards conversion to Christianity.
6. It, of course, was influenced by Christianity but it's source of inspiration was the ancient Hindu religious texts.
7. 'Brahmo Samaj' attacked all social evils of the Hindu society

like *Sati*, polygamy, child-marriage, caste-system, *Purdah* system untouchability and use of intoxicants.

8. It adopted all modern means of propaganda to spread it's ideas.
9. It's activities were primarily confined to Bengal but it's branches were extended in many other provinces as well and also inspired other people to establish similar organisations elsewhere.
10. It also worked for the welfare of peasants, freedom of Press, social legislation etc.
11. It paved the way on which other Hindu social and religious reformers could tread.
12. It also participated indirectly in building national sentiments among the Indians.
13. Thus, *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy and his 'Brahmo Samaj' did a lot towards rousing social, religious and political awakening in India.

Q. 3. What do you know about the young Bengal Movement ?

The reformist zeal of *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy was carried forward by several intellectuals in Bengal which resulted in the Young Bengal Movement. The leader of this movement was a young Anglo-Indian, Henry Vivion Derozio. Derozio was born in A.D. 1809 and was educated at Hindu College. He became a teacher in that very college and inspired his students to think rationally and freely and to love and struggle for liberty, equality and freedom in society and politics. His followers were called the Derozians who led the Young Bengal Movement. They were radicals in their ideas and that was one reason of their failure to carry their message to the common people. Besides, their radicalism was bookish which had no grasp of the realities of Indian life. Therefore, the Young Bengal Movement did not gain in popularity and brought no fruitful result. Yet, it represented the sentiments of the educated Bengalis and tried to carry forward the message of Ram Mohan Roy concerning social, religious and economic reforms through newspapers, pamphlets and public associations. The Derozians enlightened the people in Bengal concerning many questions of public interests like the freedom of the Press, trial by Jury, protection of cultivators from the oppression of the landlords, employment of Indians in higher services, etc. That is why, S. N. Banerjee, the liberal nationalist leader described them as the pioneers of the modern civilization of Bengal.

Points to Remember

1. Inspired by the Ideas of 'Brahmo Samaj', an Anglo-Indian teacher at Hindu College, Henry Vivion Derozio, led a movement called the 'Young Bengal Movement'.
2. The Derozians enlightened the people in Bengal concerning many questions of public interest like the freedom of Press,

trial by Jury, protection of cultivators from the oppression of landlords, employment of Indians in higher services, etc.

3. The Derozians were mostly radical intellectuals and failed to approach and influence the masses.

4. Yet, they were pioneers of modern civilization in Bengal.

Q. 4. What do you know about Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar ? How did he contribute towards the social reform movement in India ?

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a scholar of Sanskrit. Yet he accepted many good points of western culture. He proved a great social reformer of Bengal. He was the Principal of a Sanskrit College. He admitted non-*Brahmin* students to his college which itself was a revolutionary step at that time. Besides, he evolved a new technique of teaching Sanskrit and also introduced the study of western thought in it.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar dedicated his life to the cause of social reform, particularly to the uplift of Indian women. He raised his voice in favour in marriages of widows and a movement emerged in its favour under his leadership. In A.D. 1855 representations were sent to the government from all important cities of India requesting it to legalise the marriage of widows. It resulted in the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856 which legalised the marriage of a Hindu widow. The marriage of a widow and the first one among the upper caste was celebrated in Calcutta on December 7, 1856 under the supervision of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He also protested against polygamy and child marriages. He did a lot for the education of females and organised nearly thirty-five girl schools, many of which were run at his expense. Thus, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar helped a lot in reforming the Hindu society in Bengal.

Points to Remember

1. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a scholar of Sanskrit, principal of a college of Sanskrit, introduced the study of western thought in Sanskrit and taught it to non-*Brahmana* students.

2. He was devoted to social reform particularly the uplift of Indian women.

3. His efforts resulted in passing the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856 which legalised the marriage of a Hindu widow.

4. The first marriage of an upper-caste Hindu widow was celebrated under his supervision in Calcutta in December, 1856.

5. He did a lot for the education of females and organised nearly thirty-five girl schools many of which were run at his expense.

Q. 5. Describe the social and religious reforms of Swami Dayanand.

Or

What was the aim and contribution of Arya Samaj towards social and religious reforms in India ?

Swami Dayanand was the founder of the Arya Samaj. His childhood name was Mool Shankar. He was born in a small town, Tankara in Gujarat in a conservative Brahmin family in 1824. He lost his faith in idol-worship at an early age. He left his home before his marriage in 1845 and travelled all over India as a *Sannyasee* till 1861. In 1861, he met an ascetic, *Swami* Vrajanand at Mathura and became his disciple. There he studied the *Vedas*. He left his teacher after completing his education and took up the mission of spreading true Hindu religion and culture all over India. He established the Arya Samaj first at Bombay in 1875. He travelled throughout the country to propagate his views and established Arya Samaj organisations at different places for the same purpose. The Arya Samaj pursued the following principles :

1. The *Vedas* are the only source of truth. Therefore, the study of the *Vedas* is absolutely necessary.
2. Recitation of the *Mantras* of the *Vedas* and performance of *Havan*.
3. Opposition to idol worship.
4. Opposition to the theory of God-incarnation and religious pilgrimages.
5. Faith in the theory of *Karma* and transmigration of soul.
6. Faith in one God who has no concrete existence.
7. Belief in female education.
8. Opposition to child marriage and polygamy.
9. Support to widow remarriage in certain circumstances.
10. Propagation of Hindi and Sanskrit languages.

Working on these principles, the Arya Samaj did remarkably useful work for reforming the Hindu society and religion. Two basic concepts of the Arya Samaj largely contributed to its success. One, it provided equal status to all its members. There remained no place for casteism in the Arya Samaj. Second, the Arya Samaj carried on its religious propaganda with fanatic zeal. One basic element of Hinduism had always been its spirit of tolerance both in principle and practice. This remained the main weakness of Hinduism vis-a-vis Islam and Christianity. While Hinduism tolerated each of them, Islam claimed superiority of the *Koran* and Prophet Muhammad and Christianity claimed it for the *Bible* and Jesus Christ and both the Muhammedans and the Christians believed that their religions were the only true religions and, therefore, were to be pursued by all. The fanatic zeal of both these religions successfully drew large numbers of converts from the Hindus. *Swami* Dayanand grasped the situation and provided fanatic zeal to the Arya Samaj. He claimed that only *Vedas* were the repositories of true knowledge and, therefore, the true religion was only the religion of

the *Vedas*. The Arya Samaj, therefore, became a fanatic supporter of Hinduism and became an organ of militant Hinduism. Inspired by a spirit of equality and religious zeal, the Arya Samaj did remarkable service for the cause of Hinduism and Hindu society. It also helped in the educational advancement of Indians and had its impact on national movement as well. No other social and religious movement can stand in comparison with the Arya Samaj for its popular appeal among the Indians.

In the realm of religion, the Arya Samaj opposed idol-worship, ritualism, practice of animal-sacrifice, the idea of heaven and hell and the concept of fatalism. It simplified Hinduism and helped develop faith in its supremacy among the Hindus. The Arya Samaj claimed that the *Vedas* were a fountainhead of all knowledge and we would find in them all principles concerning politics, economics, social sciences, humanities and all branches of positive sciences. The Hindus, in fact, have forgotten their true knowledge but if they would study the *Vedas* they would find all knowledge of the world compacted in them. Therefore, the Hindus need not look towards Christianity, Islam or western culture for guidance for any political, social or scientific principle. Thus, having complete faith in the superiority of Hinduism and the *Vedas*, the Arya Samaj successfully met the challenge of Islamic and Christian propaganda against Hinduism and, in turn, attacked their principles vehemently.

The Arya Samaj provided useful service to Hindu society as well by carrying out an onslaught on its social evils. It opposed child-marriages, polygamy, *Purdah*, casteism, the practice of *Sati*, etc. It incessantly worked for the education of the females, abolition of casteism and uplift of the depressed classes. Intercaste marriages and interdining were practised by the members of the Arya Samaj in their routine life. It did one more extraordinary work. It started to take back the converted Muslims and the Christians into the Hindu fold after purifying them. It was called the '*Shuddhi* movement'. Many Hindus were converted to Christianity in ignorance. The Christian missionaries had drawn large number of converts from among the uneducated, poor and depressed classes of the Hindus. They could not be taken back within the fold of Hinduism even if they desired it. The Arya Samaj opened the gates of Hinduism to them and defended its action on the basis of the *Dharma* of the *Vedas*. By its efforts, a large number of people were restored to the Hindu fold.

The Arya Samaj has established a large number of educational institutions in India, particularly in the North. *Gurukuls*, *Kanyagurukuls* and D. A. V. Schools and Colleges have been established by the Arya Samaj for the education of both males and females. While the *gurukuls* provide education mostly in Sanskrit, the *Vedas*, *Ayurveda* etc., D. A. V. Schools and Colleges provide modern education in humanities and sciences. These educational institutions have been active not only in defending Hindu religion, society and culture but

also in the growth of education, knowledge and enlightenment in general.

The Arya Samaj also contributed towards rousing the national consciousness. One of the biographers of *Swami* Dayanand wrote :

"Political independence was one of the first objectives of Dayanand. Indeed, he was the first man to use the term *Swaraj*. He was the first to insist on people to use only *Swadeshi* articles manufactured in India and to discard foreign things. He was the first to recognize Hindi as the national language of India." Many Indian national leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokahle were deeply influenced by the philosophy and principles of the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj, in fact, participated in building up personalities of many Indians who imbibed the spirit of militant Hinduism from it and participated actively in the national movement. The rise of Extremism within the All India Congress was certainly because of the militant spirit of Hinduism and there is no doubt that the Arya Samaj played an active role in it. Thus there is no doubt that the Arya Samaj, by claiming superiority of Hindu religion and culture, defended the honour of Hindus and helped them develop a sense of self-respect and confidence which inspired national patriotism among them. Therefore, it certainly helped in building up national consciousness.

Thus, *Swami* Dayanand and the Arya Samaj have made a remarkable contribution towards Indian religion, society, education and national consciousness.

Points to Remember

1. Mool Shankar who was, later on, known as *Swami* Dayanand lost faith in idol-worship at an early age, became a wandering *Sanyasee*, became a disciple of *Swami* Vrajanand at Mathura, took up the mission of spreading true Hindu religion and culture all over India and, for this purpose, established the first Arya Samaj at Bombay in 1875.
2. In the beginning, the Arya Samaj pursued ten principles, *viz.*, faith in the *Vedas*, recitation of *Mantras* and performance of *Havana*, opposition to idol-worship, opposition to theory of God-reincarnation and religious pilgrimages, faith in the theory of *Karma* and transmigration of soul, faith in one God who had no concrete existence, belief in female education, opposition to child marriage and polygamy, support to widow-remarriage and propagation of Sanskrit and Hindi languages.
3. Arya Samaj provided equal status to all its members.
4. The spirit of toleration of Hinduism was proving its greatest weakness against the Islam and Christianity which was understood by *Swami* Dayanand and, therefore, he declared that true religion was that of only the *Vedas*, that is, Hinduism because of which Arya Samaj pursued Hinduism with fanatic zeal.

5. Arya Samaj claimed that the *Vedas* were the source of all knowledge and, therefore, the Hindus need not look towards Christianity, Islam or western culture for guidance for any political, social and scientific principles.
6. It successfully met the challenge of Islamic and Christian propaganda against Hinduism and, in turn, attacked their principles vehemently.
7. It attacked all social evils of the Hindu society like *Sati*, *Purdah*, polygamy, child-marriage, casteism, etc.
8. Besides, through '*Shuddhi* movement,' it started taking back converts to other faiths within the fold of Hinduism.
9. Arya Samaj established *Gurukuls*, *Kanya-gurukuls* and D.A.V. institutions and, thus, helped in spreading education among the Indians.
10. It also contributed towards arousing national consciousness, building up of personalities of many national leaders and rise of extremism within the Congress.
11. It, thus, has contributed towards all aspects of Indian society.

Q. 6. What do you know of Ramakrishna Mission ? What was its impact on Indian society and religion ?

Or

Describe the teachings of *Swami* Vivekananda and point out their impact on the Indian society.

The first Ramakrishna *Math* was established by the disciple of Ramakrishna, *Swami* Vivekananda at Baranagar in A.D. 1887. In 1899 another *Math* was started at Vellore which became the central *Math* or the chief organizational centre of all the *Maths* of Ramakrishna Mission. In 1909, Ramakrishna Mission, a sister organization was also started.

The Mission has drawn all its principles and ideals from the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna did nothing towards the organisation of the Mission but, during his life time, he groomed some devoted persons to carry his message to the people. Ramakrishna's primary contribution towards the upliftment of Indian people is his message of spiritualism. He preached the esoteric knowledge contained in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* to the Indian people through his simple teachings and saintly life and thus, revived their faith in their religion and culture. His second contribution is his message of the unity of all religions. He explained that all religions are simply different paths to attain *Nirvana*. The third valuable contribution of Ramakrishna is his message of service to the humanity. He preached that every individual is a part of God. Therefore, service to an individual means service to God and that leads to one's salvation. His concept of service to man was on a higher plane in comparison to Buddhism and Christianity. Buddhism does not regard every individual as part of God. It teaches service

to humanity simply as a means for an individual to move forward towards higher levels of morality and spiritualism. Christianity preaches love to one's neighbour again for the same purpose. Thus, both preach service to man on compassionate grounds with a view to facilitating an individual's progress towards spiritualism. Therefore, in both, the individual who serves another individual is definitely superior. But Ramakrishna advised the people to serve an individual as a part of God. Therefore, the man who serves enjoys no superiority over the one who is served. Thus, the concept of Ramakrishna of serving humanity was not based on compassion or charity but on service to God and, therefore, was superior to the concepts of both Buddhism and Christianity.

The credit of propagating these ideals of Ramakrishna goes to his great disciple, *Swami* Vivekananda. Vivekananda represented the very soul of Hinduism and its spiritualism. His message of spiritualism contributed remarkably towards strengthening of not only Hindu religion and society but also of Indian nationalism. He revived Hindu spiritualism and thus established its superiority over Islam and Christianity. He also pointed out the weaknesses of the Hindu religion and society. He made the Hindus realize the degraded position to which they had fallen and inspired them to regain their past glory. He suggested to the Hindus that if they would pursue the path as shown by the *Vedantas* they would realise the soul of their religion and be able to build a glorious society and nation once more. He gave the message of Hindu spiritualism to the people in the West as well which established not only its superiority there but also made the Hindus self-confident about their religion and culture. It awakened Hinduism and led to its transformation which was aptly described by Sister Nivedita as 'Aggressive Hinduism'. The Hindus no more remained shy or diffident about their religion and culture. On the contrary, they started championing the cause of their religion and culture openly and many scholars came forward to defend it.

Swami Vivekananda also helped in raising the status of religion and spiritualism among the people of the entire world. He expressed the view that religion was natural and necessary to every individual and every society because that fulfilled their natural desires. The measurement of a nation's progress also lies in its attainments in the spiritual field. Therefore, he advised every nation and all groups of people to pursue religion and spiritualism. But he also desired the material progress of man. On that ground, he desired mutual exchange of ideas between the East and the West. He believed that India could educate the West in the field of spiritualism and itself could learn the means of material progress from the West. Vivekananda believed in the fundamental unity of all religions. He, therefore, preached tolerance, equality and cooperation among people of all faiths. Service to humanity occupied a very important place in the teachings of Vivekananda. He regarded education, emancipation of women and removal of

poverty as absolute necessities for pursuing religion. He, therefore, vehemently attacked ignorance, poverty, blind faith and conservatism which existed among the Indians and wanted riddance from them. That is why he preached service to humanity as the foremost duty of every individual He advised one of his disciples: "The poor, the ignorant, the illiterate, the afflicted—let these be your God; know that service to these is the highest religion." Vivekananda, however, did not suggest social reforms directly. He believed that spiritual progress would lead to self-realization of individuals and that would, in turn, lead to social and national uplift automatically.

Vivekananda participated in building up of the Indian nationalism. The way he established the superiority of Hindu religion and spiritualism, certainly, generated a feeling of confidence, self-glorification and patriotism among the Hindus, and that helped in the nation building. One among the modern Indian historians has remarked: "*Swami* Vivekananda might well be called the father of the modern Indian nationalism, he largely created it and also embodied in his own life its highest and noblest elements." Thus, *Swami* Vivekananda and his Ram Krishna Mission made a solid contribution to Hindu culture, religion, society and Indian nationalism.

Points to Remember

1. *Swami* Vivekananda established the first Ramkrishna Math at Baranagar in 1887 and the second one at Vellore in 1899 which became the chief organisational *Math* of Ramakrishna Mission.
2. In 1909, it's sister organisation, Ramkrishna Mission was started.
3. Ramkrishna himself established no organisation but prepared some devoted persons to give his message to the people—one of them being *Swami* Vivekananda.
4. Yet, Ramkrishna contributed towards the upliftment of the Indian people in three ways, *viz.*, the message of spiritualism, unity of all religions and service to humanity.
5. Ramkrishna advised the people to serve an individual as a part of God and therefore, his concept of serving humanity was not based on compassion or charity but on service to God and, thus, was superior to the concepts of both Buddhism and Christianity.
6. The credit of propagating the ideas of Ramkrishna went to his disciple, *Swami* Vivekananda who represented the very soul of Hinduism and its spirituality.
7. Vivekananda revived Hindu spiritualism and, thus, established its superiority over Islam and Christianity.
8. He also pointed out the weaknesses of the Hindu society and

religion and suggested that if the Hindus would pursue the path of *Vedanta* they would realise the soul of their religion and be able to build a glorious society and nation once more.

9. He gave message of spiritualism to the people of the West and, thus, made the Hindus self-confident of their religion and culture which led to the transformation of Hinduism to 'Aggressive Hinduism'.
10. Vivekananda helped in raising the status of religion and spiritualism among the people of the world because he told them that the real measurement of a nation's progress lies in its attainment in the spiritual field.
11. But he also desired the material progress of man and, therefore, believed that there should be exchange of ideas between the West and the East; *viz*, while India should educate the West in the field of spiritualism, it should learn the means of material progress from the West.
12. Vivekananda preached tolerance, equality and cooperation among people of all faiths.
13. Service to humanity occupied a very important place in the teachings of Vivekananda and he regarded education, emancipation of women and removal of poverty as absolute necessities for pursuing religion.
14. He, however, did not suggest social reforms directly.
15. Vivekananda, by creating, feelings of self-confidence, self-glorification and patriotism among the Hindus, participated in building up of the Indian nationalism.

Q. 7. What do you know about the Theosophical Society and its contribution towards the social and religious movements of the 19th century ?

The word 'theosophy' has been constituted by combining two Greek words, *i.e.*, 'Theos' which means God and 'Sophia' which means wisdom. Therefore, theosophy means knowledge of God. In Sanskrit, it is called *Brahma Gyan*. The Greek scholar Iambechus was the first man who used the word theosophy for the knowledge of God in the third century. In modern times, this word has been used by Theosophical Society. The Society was first established by Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott in U.S.A. in 1875. They were inspired by Indian thought and culture. Later on, they shifted the headquarters of the Society to Adyar near Madras in India itself in 1892. The fundamental tenets of the Theosophical Society were :

(a) To form an organisation of all people on the basis of fraternity of all.

(b) To study ancient religion, philosophy and science which is found in every part of the world.

(c) To find out the laws of nature and development of divine powers in man.

The philosophy of Theosophical Society was primarily derived from Hindu and Buddhist philosophies. The concepts of fraternity of all men and the belief that all individuals are parts of one Universal God have been drawn from Hinduism. It was accepted that all religions are simply different forms of one Ancient wisdom and, therefore, the study of the philosophies of all religions was necessary to find the ultimate truth. The Society suggested the following means to develop divine powers in man.

(a) Remember *Brahma* which gives birth to all individuals and exists in them.

(b) Believe that religion manifests itself in different forms but all are parts of universal *Brahma.*

(c) Believe that saints, philosophers, prophets etc. are all children of *Brahma* and they rule the world under His guidance.

(d) Believe that a man can attain salvation gradually by his good deeds.

Besides, the philosophy of the Society adhered to the following tenets also :

(a) God creates different races with a view to developing different virtues in mankind.

(b) The ultimate goal of an individual is to attain salvation but salvation does not mean end of deeds but self-realization.

(c) Male and female are equal because soul has no distinction of sex.

(d) Every person should listen to the teachings of saints and philosophers because they guide individual in attaining salvation.

(e) Whatever happens in the world, happens according to the wishes of God.

(f) All religions are important because each of them tells us the path leading to salvation.

(g) An individual should attempt not only for his salvation but should also help others in achieving salvation.

In the beginning, the theosophoical society influenced the educated Indians in large numbers. Mrs. Annie Besant who, later on, became the President of the Society and started the Home Rule Movement popularized it further. But the religious influence of the Society remained limited. It did more useful work in stirring up Indian nationalism under the guidance of Mrs. Annie Besant.

Points to Remember

1. Thesophy means knowledge of God or what we call *Brahma Gyan* in Sanskrit.
2. The Theosophical society was first established by H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott in U. S. A. in 1875 and, later on in 1892 they shifted the headquarters of the Society to Adyar near Madras in India.
3. The philosophy of the society was primarily drawn from Hindu and Buddhist philosophies.
4. The Society suggested several means to develop divine power in man, *e.g.*, remembering *Brahma*, believing that all people are children of God, etc.
5. The Society adhered to certain principles also, *e.g.* the ultimate aim of an individual is to attain *Nirvana*. Male and females are equal, all religions are important, etc.
6. The Society influenced the educated Indians in large number and Mrs. Annie Besant popularized it further.
7. Yet, the religious influence of the society remained limited.
8. It did more useful work in awakening Indian nationalism under the guidance of Mrs. Annie Besant.

Q. 8. What do you know of Aligarh Movement ? What was its importance ?

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan started the Aligarh Movement. He attempted to modernize the Muslims and encouraged them to acquire English education. Many scholars have expressed the view that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan performed the same service to the Muslims in India as *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy did to the Hindus. He was the pioneer of the Aligarh Movement which contributed mostly towards modernizing and awakening the Muslims in the nineteenth century.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had fixed two goals which he pursued throughout his life : They were :

1. To attempt for better relations between the Muslims and the English.
2. To provide modern education to the Muslims.

On the one hand, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan attempted to convince the Muslims that their interest lay in being loyal to the English ; and on the other, pleaded with the English that the Muslims were not against their rule and, if shown a little favour, would become perfectly loyal to them. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan embarked on his efforts in favourable circumstances. By that time, the Hindus had developed national consciousness after receiving English education. The English, therefore, became inclined to favour the Muslims with a view to utilising their communal sentiment against the growing spirit of nationalism among the Hindus. This gave easy success to Sir

Syed Ahmed Khan's mission of bringing the English and the Muslims closer to one another.

In 1877 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan started the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh which later on grew up as the University of Aligarh and became the nerve centre of the Aligarh Movement. He also organised a 'Mohammadan Educational Conference' which served as a common platform for meeting of the Muslims and spreading western education among them.

The Aligarh Movement made valuable contribution to the educational, social and economic progress of the Muslims in India. Gradually, the Muslims moved forward towards modernization and progress. But, the Aligarh Movement mostly remained opposed to Indian nationalism. It also remained antagonistic to the Hindus and the Indian National Congress. Several factors contributed to its attitude. Firstly, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his Aligarh Movement depended on the favour of the English from the very beginning and, therefore, it became necessary for them to support the English in their policy of dividing the Hindus and the Muslims. Secondly, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was more deeply impressed by western culture and education than the Hindu reformists and, therefore, became more favourably inclined towards the English in every field. Thirdly, as the Muslims were in minority in India, he felt that the Muslims could never stand on an equal footing with the Hindus and, therefore, it was necessary for the Muslims to remain loyal to the English and attempt to win their support. Only sometimes we find Sir Syed Ahmed Khan free of communalism but mostly it was not so.

The Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh became the centre of the political activities of the Muslims. Its first Principal, Mr. Theodore Back deeply influenced the ideas of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He also had a hand in inflaming the communal sentiments of the Muslims which he found necessary for the safety of the English rule in India. In 1893 he founded the 'Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of India' for the same purpose. The membership of this Association was open only to the Muslims and its primary objective was to keep the Muslims aloof from politics. The next Principal, Mr. Morrison also adopted the policy of fuelling Muslims communalism against the Hindus and the 'All India Congress'. By that time, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan also became a strong opponent of the 'All India Congress' and he did not hide his views in this respect.

Therefore, the Aligarh Movement largely helped in fuelling Muslim Communalism in India. It remained antagonistic to national movement and, thus, was a contributory factor in the partition of the country. For the Indian Muslims, it certainly proved advantageous in many respects. As the Hindu social and religious reform movements helped in improving the Hindu religion and society, the Aligarh Movement did likewise to the Muslim society. It modernized the Muslims, helped them in their education and enlightenment and

improved their economic and social status. Therefore, the services rendered by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement to the Muslims in India are, certainly, creditable.

Points to Remember

1. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the pioneer of the Aligarh Movement and he performed the same service to the Muslims in India as *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy did to the Hindus.
2. He fixed two goals in his life, *viz.*, to attempt for better relations between the Muslims and the English and to provide modern education to the Muslims.
3. The English welcomed his move because they had become suspicious towards the Hindus who were developing national consciousness.
4. The English, therefore, thought of utilising the communal sentiments of the Muslims against Hindu nationalists.
5. In 1877, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan started the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, which later on became the University of Aligarh and the nerve-centre of the Aligarh Movement.
6. The Aligarh Movement contributed a lot towards educational, social and economic progress of the Muslims in India but it remained antagonistic to the Hindus and the Indian National Congress because, being dependent on the support of the English, the Aligarh Movement had to support the policy of 'divide and rule' of the English. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was favourably inclined towards the English and the Muslims, being in minority, felt it safe to be with the English.
7. The first two English Principals of the Anglo-Oriental College participated actively in inflaming the communal sentiments of the Muslims.
8. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan too became firmly opposed to Indian National Congress.
9. The Aligarh Movement remained antagonistic to national movement and, thus, participated in the partition of the country, yet it did useful service to the Muslims in all fields of life.

Q. 9. What role was played by the social and religious movements of the 19th century towards awakening Indian nationalism ?

In the 19th century, India witnessed the upsurge of several social and religious movements. Their primary aim was to defend the Indian culture, religion and society from the onslaught of western culture and Christian religion. The Indians had come in contact with the western culture at the time when intellectualism and individualism were its dominant features and they bowed to it with respect. Therefore, western culture, its dress, manners, society, religion and ideas became the ideals of the English educated Indians. It seemed, at that time that the Indians would forget their own culture and

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would imitate and accept the western culture completely. But the Indians could resist it. Western culture gave primary importance to those feelings of the individual which were based on logic and reason and tried to wrest him free from outside bondages whether they were of religion, society or anything else. It, thus, discarded blind faith and emphasized reason. This very spirit of the western culture was grasped by many Indians because that was the heritage of ancient India as well. The Indians, after accepting it, judged their social religious and political traditions on reason and discarded blind acceptance of faith. That resulted in several social and religious movements in the 19th century. The Brahmo Samaj and its different offshoots like the *Adi* Brahmo Samaj, the *Sadharana* Brahmo Samaj, the *Prarathna* Samaj, the Young Bengal Movement, the Arya Samaj, the Ram Krishna Mission, the Theosophical Society, the Aligarh Movement etc. were the attempts of the Indians to bring about improvement in their religion and society on a rational basis. Thus, the primary aim of all these social and religious movements was reform of the Indian society and religion. Yet, these movements, except the Aligarh Movement, helped in awakening Indian nationalism though indirectly.

The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ram Krishna Mission and the Theosophical Society, in their own respective ways, revived the glory of ancient India, created faith in Indian culture and religion and tried to strengthen them by removing their weaknesses. The Brahmo Samaj was the pioneer movement among these social and religious movements. It glorified the ancient culture of India, developed confidence among the Indians towards their religion and, thus, participated indirectly in resurgence of Indian nationalism. Keshava Chandra Sen was the first Indian who attempted to reform the society on all-India basis. Taking cue from him, Surendra Nath Banrjee was the first one who took up his political movement on All-India basis. Shiva Nath Shastri included the welfare of India and its people in the prayer of the *Sadharna* Brahmo Samaj. Thus, though the Brahmo Samaj did not participate in arousing national feeling directly, it certainly inspired many Indians with it. The Arya Samaj moved ahead in this direction. It established many schools, colleges, *Gurukuls* and *Kanya Gurukuls* which inspired the young boys and girls to have faith in their ancient religion and culture which, certainly helped in developing a strong sense of national patriotism. Besides, the Arya Samaj, as an organisation, helped in arousing national consciousness. One of the biographers of *Swami* Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, wrote : "Political independence was one of the first objectives of Dayanand. Indeed, he was the first man to use the term *Swaraj*. He was the first person to insist on people using only *Swadeshi* goods manufactured in India and to discard foreign articles. He was the first to recognize Hindi as the national language of India." Many Indian national leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were deeply influenced by the philosophy and principles of the Arya Samaj. The Arya

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Samaj, in fact, participated in building up personalities of many Indians who imbibed the spirit of militant Hinduism from it and participated actively in the national movement. The rise of extremism within the 'All-India Congress' was certainly because of the militant spirit of Hinduism and there is no doubt that the Arya Samaj was an active participant in it. Dr. R. C. Majumdar writes : "Arya Samaj was a militant sect from the very beginning. Its chief inspiration came from its intense patriotism. Thus, there is no doubt that the Arya Samaj, by claiming superiority of Hindu religion and culture, defended the honour of the Hindus and provided them with a sense of self-respect and confidence which inspired national patriotism among them. Therefore, it certainly helped in building up national consciousness. *Swami* Vivekananda, the founder of Rama Krishna Mission too participated in building up Indian nationalism. The way he established the superiority of Hindu religion and spiritualism, certainly provided confidence, self-glorification and patriotism among the Hindus and that helped in nation building. The prayer which he suggested for a Hindu was "Thou, Lord of Gauri, O : thou mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness to me. O, thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a Man." Thus, Vivekananda, certainly, helped in strengthening national sentiment. One among the modern Indian historians has remarked : "*Swami* Vivekananda might well be called the father of modern Indian nationalism ; he largely created it and also embodied in his own life its highest and noblest elements." The same way, the President of the Theosophical Society, Mrs. Annie Besant also helped not only in strengthening Indian nationalism but also the political movement in India. She was the one who brought about unity of the Moderates and the Extremists of the Congress in 1916 and also led the 'Home Rule Movement' and, thus, gave positive support to national movement.

Thus, we can say that the social and religious movements of the 19th century not only helped in awakening Indian nationalism but also in strengthening it.

Points to Remember

1. In the 19th century when India seemed to bow before western culture and the educated Indians had lost faith in their society, religion and culture, certain sccial and religious movements took place which checked their mad race towards the west.
2. Western culture discarded blind faith and emphasized on reason and that was grasped by many Indians because that was the heritage of ancient India as well.
3. When the Indians started judging their society and religion on reason, it resulted in many social and religious movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya-Samaj, the Ramkrishna Mission, the Aligarh Movement etc.
4. All these movements, except the Aligarh Movement, helped in awakening Indian nationalism though indirectly.

5. The Brahmo Samaj glorified the ancient culture of India developed confidence among the Indians towards their religion and society and, thus, helped in resurgence of Indian nationalism.
6. The Arya Samaj established many schools and colleges where the students learnt to glorify their religion and culture which helped in developing national patriotism.
7. *Swami* Dayanand, the pioneer of the Arya Samaj movement was the first person to use the word *Swaraj*, insisted on the use of *Swadeshi* and recognised Hindi as the national language of India which inspired Hindu nationalists and several leaders in the Indian National Congress like Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak *Lala* Lajpat Rai, etc. who led the extremist movement in India.
8. Thus, the Arya Samaj, certainly, helped in building up national consciousness.
9. *Swami* Vivekananda established the superiority of Hindu religion and spiritualism, provided confidence, self-glorification and patriotism among the Hindus which helped in nation-building.
10. The President of the Theosophical Society, Mrs. Annie Besant also helped in strengthening Indian nationalism and the political movement in India.
11. The social and religious movements of the 19th century, thus, not only helped in awakening Indian nationalism but also in strengthening it.

6

GROWTH OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OR CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM : ITS POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OR BACKGROUND

Q. 1. Describe the causes and circumstances which helped in the growth of Indian nationalism.

Prior to the revolt of 1857, the British treated India as one country and one nation because it suited their Imperial designs. At that time, they were attempting to conquer India and therefore, they pleaded that the conquest of this entire subcontinent would alone provide administrative and political unity to this country and nation which would be useful for the people. Thus, the conquest of India was justified on the ground of benefitting the Indian people. But, after the revolt of 1857, they reversed their stand. They abandoned the policy of annexation because the existence of native states came useful to them. Besides, they pursued the policy of divide and rule in India after the revolt. Therefore, it became necessary for them to discard the concept of one Indian nation. The British historians, therefore, upheld that India was never a nation. Rather, it was a land of different languages, dresses, social customs, religions, races, ideas, etc. Politically too, it was never united and attempts to unite it politically had always failed. The Indians developed the concept of nationalism only during the British rule. Thus, the British scholars have maintained that Indian nationalism is the heritage of the British.

The Indian scholars, however, have refuted this opinion of the British scholars. They have argued that India, of course, is a country of variety. It is primarily because of the geographical vastness of the country and the liberal cultural attitudes of people. But behind all this variety in its culture, religion, manners, customs, etc. there has always existed a basic unity among the Indian people. India, of course, had remained divided politically and efforts to bring about its unity always failed, but culturally India has always remained united. *Vedic* religion, Sanskrit language, Hindu customs, places of pilgrimage which are spread all over India, values of life, etc. have always provided unity to India. The Indians therefore, have always felt that they belong to one country. Even the Indian Muslims have

become part and parcel of this country politically and culturally. It were the British who deliberately divided the Hindus and the Muslims leading to communal differences between the two. All those factors which contributed towards the formation of nationalism were already existing in India. Yet, it is accepted that nationalism in modern sense developed in India only during the British rule in the later half of the nineteenth century. But then the concept of nationalism in Europe is also a product of the nineteenth century. Thus, it has been rightly contended that factors which helped in the formation of the spirit of nationalism were existing in India even prior to the advent of the British though it could be fully developed and organised only during the British rule resulting in the national movement in India for Independence.

Following factors contributed to the emergence of political consciousness or concept of Indian nationalism :

(*a*) *The Revolt of 1857* : The Revolt of 1857, of course, was neither a national revolt nor a war of independence, yet, it was regarded by many as such. The same way, the leaders of the revolt were regarded as national heroes. It inspired the Indians to fight the British. Besides, the Indians did not forget the atrocities perpetrated by the British on Indians during the period of the revolt. The hatred towards the British in Indians alike provided a cementing force in them.

(*b*) *Political and Administrative Unity*: India, for the first time, was provided with political and administrative unity under the British rule and that unity continued for a long time. One rule, one set of laws, judicial courts, administrative officers who were transferred from one place to another provided concept of one citizenship and one nation among the Indians.

(*c*) *Developed Means of Communication and Transport* : The British constructed Railways, roads, canals, provided telegraph, wireless etc. and organised postal services all over India. Of course, all these facilities were developed primarily to safeguard the Imperial interests. Yet, the Indians were also benefitted by them. Besides, the Indians of distant places could get the opportunity to come closer to one another under British regime which provided them not only a sense of unity but also the facility to organise an All-India movement.

(*d*) *Revival of the Glory of Ancient India* : In the 19th century, the glory of India's past was revived. Western scholars like Max Muller, William Jones, Charles Wilkins etc. were pioneers in this field. They translated several ancient Sanskrit texts into English and attempted to find out the past history and culture of India. They established the fact that the ancient Indian culture surpassed every other culture and Indian philosophy had no match in the world. The Indian scholars were inspired by it. Then many among them like Rakhal Das Banerjee, R. D. Bhandarkar, Har

Prasad Shastri, etc. helped in reviving the past glory of India. Some of them, of course, in reviving the glory of Ancient India, overlooked the importance of medieval age and indirectly encouraged Hindu revivalism. The mistake was committed by several Muslim scholars also while interpreting medieval history. They attempted to glorify medieval India and, thus, indirectly encouraged Muslim orthodoxy. However, many other scholars maintained a balance and helped in establishing the fact that India had once held a great stature both in political and cultural fields. That helped develop patriotism among the Indians which helped in national awakening.

(*e*) *English Language, Western Education and Western Ideas*: Many Indians and Christian missionaries had introduced English education even prior to its introduction by the government. The government introduced it in 1835. Its primary purpose was 'to create a class of people who by blood and colour would be Indians but by taste, ideas and mind would be Englishmen.' It succeeded only in the beginning as the English-educated Indians started imitating western dress, manners, etc. blindly and forgot their own culture. But this was a temporary phase. Later on, the English-educated Indians were the group of people who became pioneers in the social, religious and political movements in India. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy, *Swami* Vivekanand, Dadabhai Nauroji, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Feroz Shah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, etc. who led the social, religious and political movements in India were all English educated. However, it would be wrong to assume that without English-education, the Indians could not develop the spirit of nationalism or would not have modernized India. Japan and China in Asia itself have modernized themselves without English education. Yet, it is accepted that English education was really useful to the Indians in several ways.

When English became the language of the educated Indians irrespective of differences in religion, caste and region, it became the best link of understanding and developing close contacts with one another. The educated Indians came in contact with western ideas, culture and institutions through the medium of English language. The ideas of nationalism, democracy, liberty, equality, socialism, etc. could infiltrate through them because the English language became their medium. The English-educated Indians came in contact with western literature and were influenced by the ideas and activities of men like Rousseau, Burke, James Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Joseph Mazzini, Garibaldi, etc. That imbibed in them the spirit of nationalism, democracy, liberty, independence, etc. Many educated Indians went abroad and, thus, got the opportunity to come in direct contact with western attitudes and institutions. Most of them went to Britain where they got the knowledge of freedom of speech, democratic institutions, constitutionalism, rule by law, etc. These English-educated Indians were primarily responsible for creating political awakening,

arousing national consciousness and organising the political movement in India.

(*f*) *Impact of International Events* : Several events in foreign countries also helped in awakening national consciousness. In early stages, the Declaration of Independence by U.S.A. in 1776, the French Revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848 and similar liberal movements in other European countries, the unification of Italy and Germany in 1870, the patriotic career of Mazzini and Garibaldi, etc. inspired the early liberal Indian leaders for carrying political movement in India. Later on, the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1904 revived the faith of the Asians in their strength ; the Russian Revolution of 1917 inspired all movements of the world on economic grounds ; and, the fourteen-point plan of the American President Mr. Wilson created hope for the establishment of democratic principles in every part of the world. Certainly, India too was influenced by these world events.

(*g*) *Racial Arrogance of the British* : The British always claimed their superiority over the Indians simply because they belonged to white race. They always exhibited arrogance in dealings with the Indians even prior to the Revolt. But, after the Revolt, the British became more abusive towards the Indians. Disrespect to Indians, beating of Indian servants, labourers and cultivators, disrespect to their women, etc. became common events. These happenings were given wide publicity by Indian newspapers. That inflamed the feelings of the Indians against the British which helped in the growth of national consciousness.

(*h*) *Tradition of Armed Revolts* : The Indians revolted against the British rule many times even after the revolt of 1857. In 1870, the Khakhar tribe revolted in the north-west ; the Nagas revolted in 1882 ; in 1868 the Naikdas revolted in Gujarat with a view to establishing a religious state ; in 1879-1880, the Chiefs of Koya and Konda hill tribes revolted who could be suppressed with the help of six regiments of the Madras army ; in 1899-1900 the Mundas revolted under Birsa Munda ; the cultivators of Indigo in Bengal refused to produce indigo for the planters and succeeded in their resolve in 1860; the Kukis revolted in Assam ; the peasants revolted against their landlords in Pabna ; and the Deccan riots took place in 1875. All these revolts took place in limited areas and were mostly fought against the local landlords, money-lenders, etc. who were protected by the British. So, they failed. Yet, they inspired the nationalists because they felt that primarily British administration was responsible for all this. Besides, the sacrifices which the revolting people made in their resistance to the oppressors created examples for freedom fighters.

(*i*) *The Social and Religious Movements of the 19th Century* : The social and religious movements of the 19th century like the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Rama Krishna Mission and the Theosophical Society also helped in awakening Indian nationalism. The

leaders of these movements were not only social and religious reformers but true patriots as well. They had the welfare of their country uppermost in their mind. Directly, they attempted betterment of India by carrying out a crusade against blind faith in religion and reformation of the Indian society with a view to strengthening it. And, indirectly they helped in awakening national consciousness.

The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Rama Krishna Mission and the Theosophical Society, in their own respective ways, revived the glory of ancient India, generated faith in Indian culture and religion and tried to strengthen them by removing their worst evils. The Brahmo Samaj was the pioneer among these movements. It glorified the ancient culture of India, helped develop confidence of the Indians in their religion and, thus, indirectly fostered the resurgence of Indian nationalism. Keshava Chandra Sen was the first Indian who attempted to reform the Indian society on All-India basis. Taking cue from him, Surendra Nath Banerjee was the first one who took up his movement on All-India basis. Shiva Nath Shastri included the welfare of India and its people in the prayer of *Sadharana* Brahmo Samaj. Thus, though the Brahmo Samaj did not participate in arousing national feeling directly, it certainly inspired many Indians with it. The Arya Samaj surged along in this direction. It established many schools, colleges, *Gurukuls* and *Kanya Gurukuls* which inspired the young boys and girls to glorify their ancient religion and culture leading to the resurgence of national patriotism. Besides, the Arya Samaj, as an organisation, also helped in rousing national consciousness. One of the biographers of *Swami* Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, wrote: "Political independence was one of the first objectives of Dayanand. Indeed, he was the first man to use the term *Swaraj*. He was the first person to insist on people using only *Swadeshi* goods manufactured in India and discard foreign goods. He was the first to recognise Hindi as the national language of India." Many Indian national leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were deeply influenced by the philosophy and principles of the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj, in fact, participated in building up personalities of many Indians who imbibed the spirit of militant Hinduism from it and participated actively in the national movement. The rise of extremism within the 'All India Congress' was certainly due to the militant spirit of Hinduism and there is no doubt that the Arya Samaj played an active role in it. Dr. R. C. Majumdar writes: "Arya Samaj was a militant sect from the very beginning. Its chief inspiration came from its intense patriotism." Thus, there is no doubt that the Arya Samaj, by claiming superiority of Hindu religion and culture, defended the honour of the Hindus and provided them with a sense of self-respect and confidence which inspired national patriotism among them. Therefore, it certainly helped in building up national consciousness. Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the Rama Krishna Mission, too, played a role in helping build up Indian nationalism. The way he established the superiority of Hindu religion

and spiritualism, certainly, helped inculcate a sense of confidence, self-glorification and patriotism in the Hindus and that helped in the nation-building. The prayer which he suggested for a Hindu was "Thou Lord of Gauri, O : thou Mother of Universe, vouchsafe manliness to me. O ; thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a Man." Thus, Vivekananda, certainly, helped in strengthening national sentiment. One among the modern Indian historians has remarked : "*Swami* Vivekananda might well be called the father of modern Indian nationalism, he largely created it and also embodied in his own life its highest and noblest elements." The same way, the President of the Theosophical Society, Mrs. Annie Besant also helped not only in strengthening Indian nationalism but also the political movement in India. She was the one who brought about unity of the Moderates and the Extremists in the Congress in 1916 and also led the 'Home Rule Movement' and, thus, gave positive support to national movement. Thus we can say that the social and religious movements of the 19th century not only helped in awakening Indian nationalism but also in strengthening it. A. R. Desai, therefore, has remarked that 'these movements, more or less, were struggles for achieving individual's independence and social equality and their final objective was nationalism.'

(*j*) *Debarring the Indians from Higher Services* : In the Charter Act of 1833, it was declared that employment in services would be only on merit without any distinction of religion, caste or colour. It was again repeated in the Queen's Declaration of 1858. Yet, the British never desired that the higher services should be kept open for the Indians. The age limit for Indian Civil Service Examination was kept at twenty-one years and the examination was held in Britain. That itself was sufficient to debar the Indians from entering the higher services. Even after that the Indians were debarred from these services on minor pretexts. Aurbindo Ghosh was not found qualified for these service because he could not qualify in horse-riding while Surendra Nath Banerjee had to leave his job on account of a minor mistake. Even that was not found satisfactory by the British. Therefore, in 1877 the age limit for this examination was reduced to nineteen years. The purpose was to debar the Indians from entering higher services. It was deeply resented by the educated Indians and Surendra Nath Banerjee toured all over India for creating public opinion against this discriminatory treatment of the British. It helped the educated Indians to unite for promoting their interests.

(*k*) *National Literature* : The Indians expressed their national consciousness through their literary activities in different Indian languages. Bankim Chandra composed *Bande-Mataram* and wrote the novel *Anand Math* which was based on the revolt of the *Sanyasins*. Bharatendu Harish Chandra was not only the father of modern Hindi language but was also a forefather of the *Swadeshi* movement. He wrote the drama, *Bharat Durdasha* which depicted the pitiable condition of India during the British rule. The writings of Chaudhary

Badri Narayana, Pratap Narayana Misra, Balkrishna Bhatt, etc. also expressed national patriotism. Mohammad Hussain Azad, and Altaf Hussain Hali wrote poems on love towards motherland in Urdu. Many other writers of Gujarati, Telugu and Bengali did the same in their writings. The writings of these scholars helped in arousing national consciousness.

(*l*) *Press*: *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy was the pioneer of the national Press. He started '*Sanvad-Kaumidi* in Bengali and *Miratul Akhbar* in Persian. Later on, newspapers were started by different people at different places and in different languages. Among them *The Hindu* and *Swedesh-Mitram* edited by G. Subrahmayam, *Kesri* and *Maratha* edited by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Bengali* edited by Surendra Nath Banerjee, *Amrit Bazar Patrika* edited by Sishir Kumar and Moti Lal Ghosh, *Sudharaka* edited by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, *Indian Mirror* edited by N. N. Sen, *Hindustani*, *Advocate-of-India* edited by Dada Bhai Nauroji etc. became famous. Besides, there were *The Tribune* and *Akhbar-i-Am* published in Punjab, *Indra Prakash*, *Banga-Niwasi* and *Sudharani* published in Bengal and many others. Rather, at that time every Indian leader of prominence published a newspaper of his own in his own language. All these newspapers, in the beginning, were published in vernacular languages. They played a vital role in awakening national consciousness. They published all sorts of news including the news of rude behaviour, oppression, injustice, dishonour to women, etc. done by the British towards the Indians. These news reached the villages where hardly a single individual was literate, who used to read it for others. All that helped in uniting the Indians emotionally against the British. Besides, these newspapers helped in bringing national leaders close to one another, understanding one another's opinions, propagating national problems, aspirations, necessity of self-rule, etc. and, thus, in forming public opinion and political organisation. Therefore, the Press proved to be the best medium for awakening and organising national consciousness.

(*m*) *Neo-Social Classes*: Dr. A. R. Desai is of the opinion that 'neo-social classes emerged in India during the British rule.' These neo-social classes which emerged and lived under the auspices of the single national economy and state rule realised that they had certain common interests both as distinct classes and also as people of a subject class and, therefore, each of them became a party to national movement. Thus, emergence of neo-social classes and their common interests also helped in developing national consciousness.

(*n*) *The Administration of Lord Lytton, Lord Ripon and Lord Curzon*: Various measures undertaken by the government during the viceroyalty of Lord Lytton, Lord Ripon and Lord Curzon helped in awakening national consciousness. During the Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton, the age limit for the I. C. S. Examination was reduced from twenty-one to nineteen which virtually debarred the Indians from entering the higher civil services; *Delhi Darbar* was held and

Queen Victoria was declared the Empress of India which cost Indian exchequer exorbitantly when the country was in the grip of famine and epidemic ; the Vernacular Press Act was passed which curbed the liberty of the Indian Press ; import-tax on foreign cotton cloth was abolished which harmed the textile industry of India ; the Arms Act was passed which prohibited the Indians from keeping arms without licence ; and the second Afghan War was fought which put additional burden on Indian finances. All these measures created widespread discontentment among the Indians. During the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon arose the controversy concerning the Illbert Bill. The Bill proposed that the Indian judges would have the right to try Europeans as well. It was opposed by the Britishers in India. They collected funds for this purpose, organised a systematic movement against the Bill both in Britain and in India and, ultimately, succeeded in getting the Bill amended so that it lost its very spirit. The opposition to the Bill antagonised the Indian public opinion. It exposed the policy of racial discrimination of the British. It also gave the Indians a good lesson in organising a movement. Lord Curzon not only adopted certain unpleasant measures but hurt the sense of self-respect and emotions of the Indians by his haughty language. His measures like 'Calcutta University Act' and 'Calcutta Corporation Act' seriously bruised the feelings of the Indians. But above all, the partition of Bengal created a widespread stir among the Indians and they opposed it. The use of *Swadeshi* goods and bycott of foreign goods were adopted as measures to exhibit their resentment by Indians for the first time. Surendra Nath Banerjee toured all over India to gain support of the Indians in other provinces against the partition. It all helped in strengthening Indian nationalism.

(*o*) *Dissatisfaction arising out of Economic Exploitation by the British* : The worst feature of the British rule in India was the economic exploitation of the Indian people of all classes. Many foreigners looted the wealth of India even prior to the British but the Indians were able to make up the loss. But the British siphoned off the resources of India in a most systematic and unjust way. The British came to India as traders and their primary motive was always financial gain. India therefore, lost its economic resources not only in the form of revenue, salary, pensions and other emoluments to the British officers, expenditure on defence services, income of British planters and capitalists by as was transferred to Britain, Investment (income from revenue invested in trade), etc. but also because of unfavourable balance of trade which was primarily a creation of the British. The Industrial Revolution in Britain necessitated import of raw materials from foreign countries and an extensive market for its manufactures outside. India provided both. It resulted in the destruction of Indian handicrafts and cottage industries which had good market in foreign countries. It also put heavy pressure on Indian agriculture resulting in fragmentation of holdings, rural indebtedness

etc. which resulted in extreme poverty for Indian peasants. The revenue policy of the British too added to the misery of the Indian peasants. The trade policy of the British in India and that of Britain destroyed Indian trade. While the British government in India pursued the 'policy of free trade' with a view to exporting raw materials and import British manufactured goods at a cheaper rate, Britain followed the policy of protection and put heavy import duties on Indian goods with a view to restricting their entry in Britain. Therefore, the Indian trade suffered both ways. The loss could be covered provided modern industries would have grown in India. But that could not be possible because of the apathy of the government. And, whatever was done by Indian industrialists, particularly during the course of the First World War, remained lopsided. Such exploitation of India reduced the Indians to mere subsistence level and with no hope of any relief in future. It was bound to have repercussions. And the challenge was accepted by the early moderate leaders of the All-India Congress. Dada Bhai Nauroji was the first Indian leader who analysed the causes of the poverty of the Indians. Mahadeva Govinda Ranade emphasized the need of growth of industries on modern lines and Romesh Chandra Dutta wrote the economic history of India. Then many other leaders and scholars like G. V. Joshi, P. Subramayam, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, etc. analysed the nature of the Colonial rule and its economic impact on India. Gradually, it became clear to the Indian leaders and the people in general that the cause of the poverty of the Indian people was neither their luck or lack of natural resources but the British rule. And, as all classes suffered economically and found no remedy to remove their sufferings, they realized the necessity of uprooting the British rule. Thus, economic exploitation of India by the British was one major cause of awakening national consciousness and also that of getting it organised which, finally, resulted in forming the All-India Congress.

(*p*) *The Founding of All-India Congress in 1885* : By the later part of the nineteenth century, national consciousness had been roused among the Indians and several associations were formed even prior to the founding of All India Congress. Yet, there was no all-India organisation. The Indian National Congress was established in 1885 which prepared the platform for an organised national movement. From 1885 onwards, it helped not only in widening national consciousness but also in consolidating it which, finally, led to the movement for independence in India.

Points to Remember

1. Prior to the revolt of 1857, the British treated India as one country and one nation because it suited their Imperial designs but, after the Revolt, as the policy of annexation of Indian states was abandoned and the policy of 'divide and rule' was adopted, they discarded the concept of one Indian nation and

propagated that India was never a nation and, thus, claimed that Indian nationalism was the heritage of the British.

2. The Indian scholars, on the other hand, have maintained that, of course, India is a country of variety because of its geographical vastness and liberal traditions of its people, yet there always existed a basic unity among Indian people.
3. Vedic religion, Sanskrit language, Hindu customs, various places of pilgrimages, values of life, etc. have always kept India united.
4. Even Indian Muslims became part and parcel of this country politically and culturally.
5. Thus, all those factors which contributed towards the formation of Indian nationalism already existed in India prior to the British rule though, of course, it has to be accepted that nationalism, in the modern sense, developed in India only during the British rule.
6. But then the concept of nationalism in Europe is also a product of the 19th century.
7. However, several factors participated in the emergence of Indian nationalism and political consciousness during the British rule.
8. The revolt of 1857, political and administrative unity of India, under the Brtitish rule developed means of communication and transport, revival of the glory of ancient India, English language, western education and western ideas, impact of certain international events like the declaration of Independence by U. S. A., the French Revolutions, unification of Germany and Italy and defeat of Russia by Japan, Racial arrogance of the British, tradition of armed revolts, the social and religious movements of the 19th century, debarring the Indians from higher services, national literature, press, particularly vernacular press, emergence of neo-social classes, the administration of Lord Lytton, Lord Ripon and Lord Curzon, dissatisfaction arising out of economic exploitation by the British and founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 helped in awakening the political consciousness in India and, thereby, resulted in the emergence of Indian nationalism.

7

BIRTH OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS : ITS EARLY AIMS

Q. 1. "Several organised efforts were made by the Indians to safeguard their interests even prior to the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885." Comment.

Several organisations were formed by the Indians to protect their interests even prior to the formation of the Indian National Congress. Most of them had limited objectives and were formed by the *Zamindars* or rich people who wielded influence in the society. Their efforts remained limited to their respective regions. Therefore, much could not be done by them. Among them were the *Zamindari* Association formed in 1837 and the Bengal British Indian Society founded in 1842. Another among them was the *British India Association* which was established in 1851. It worked under the guidance of certain eminent persons like Rajendra Lal Mitra, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Pyare Chandra Mitra and Harish Chandra Mukherjee. It sent a letter to the British Parliament in 1852 and appealed that the Indians should be associated in framing of laws concerning India, and examination for Indian Civil Services should be held in India as well. It, thus, represented the desire of the Indians before the British Parliament in a most modest form. It, however, failed to achieve anything substantial.

But, during the later part of the 19th century, the Indian intellectuals realised the necessity of establishing representative institutions in India and, for achieving it, the necessity of a national organisation was felt. Such views were expressed by Romesh Chandra Banerjee in 1867 while on a sojourn in Britain, by Anand Mohan Bose in 1873 at a meeting held at Brighton in England and by Christa Das Pal in 1874 in one of his articles published in *Hindu Patriot.*

The message was carried over by Dada Bhai Nauroji who established the East Indian Association in 1866 in London. The primary purpose of this association was to draw the attention of the British publish opinion towards the welfare of the Indians. Later on, Dada Bhai Nauroji established several branches of this association in India. These associations could not do much towards the national movement although these served a very useful purpose. Through these mediums Dada Bhai Nauroji, succeeded in exposing one hard

fact of the then Indian life that the primary cause of the poverty of India was its economic exploitation by the British. In fact, Dada Bhai Nauroji was the first Indian intellectual who, by his writings and speeches, clearly exposed the true nature of British Imperialism, *viz.*, economic exploitation of the Indians by the British. It encouraged other Indian intellectuals as well to take up this task. For example, R. C. Dutt wrote the *Economic History of India* later on. Dada Bhai Nauroji was elected as the President of the All India Congress three times and was called the grand old man of India for his life-long services to the nation.

In 1867 Mahadeva Govinda Ranade established the *Poona Sarvajanik Sabha.* It continued to work till the end of the Nineteenth Century for social reforms and national awakening in Maharashtra.

In 1875 Sisir Kumar Ghosh established the *India League.* It aimed at creating political and national awakening among the Indians. However, it remained active only for some time and was replaced by the *Indian Association* in 1876.

In 1881 Maha Deva Govinda Ranade established the *Madras Mahajana Sabha* for the same purpose. It served some useful purpose.

In 1885 the *Bombay Presidency Association* was formed. It did useful work for awakening national consciousness under the leadership of persons like Badruddin Tayabji and Feroz Shah Mehta.

However, among all these associations which were organised for political awakening prior to the formation of the All India Congress, the most active one was the *Indian Associatian* formed under the leadership of Surendra Nath Benerjee and Anand Mohan Bose in 1876. Its first meeting was organised in the Ilbert Hall at Calcutta where more than seven hundred people from all walks of life gathered. Its aims were elaborated by S. N. Banerjee as follows :

(a) To form a strong public opinion.

(b) To organise people of all castes and creeds on the basis of similarity of political interest and desires.

(c) To bring the Hindus and the Muslims closer to one another, and

(d) To enlist the cooperation of the commor people in public agitations.

This association opposed the Arms Act and the Vernacular Press Act when Lord Lytton passed them in 1878. It also opposed the reduction of the age from twenty-one years to nineteen years as the qualifying age for the candidates appearing in the Indian Civil Services Examination. S. N. Banerjee toured all over India for creating consciousness against this injustice among the Indian candidates. Between 1883-85, it organised several demonstrations of peasants and demanded reduced rate of revenue. In 1883 it set up an All India National Conference with a view to bring representatives from all over India to a common platform. In

1885 it held the meeting of the National Conference at Calcutta for the second time. Thus, the Indian Association was the most active organisation among all organisations formed before the All India Congress. It not only attempted at awakening and developing national consciousness but also at organising it on an All India basis.

Thus, we find that Indian national consciousness got its expression through formation of several associations even prior to the establishment of the Indian National Congress. Some of these associations did some useful work as well and also helped in building up personalities of many individuals who later on became national leaders.

Points to Remember

1. Several organizations were formed by groups of Indians to safeguard their interests prior to the formation of Indian National Congress.
2. The Zamindari Association was formed in 1837 : the Bengal British Indian Society was formed in 1842 : and the British India Association was formed in 1851 which appealed to the British Parliament that Civil Services Examination should be held in India as well.
3. During later part of the Nineteenth Century, the Indians felt the necessity of a national organization.
4. Dada Bhai Nauroji established the East Indian Association in 1866 at London and, later on its several branches in India.
5. These associations could not achieve much but Dada Bhai Nauroji made them good instruments for exposing economic exploitation of the Indians by the British which encouraged other Indians as well to do the same.
6. Mahadeva Govinda Ranade established the *Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* in 1867 and *Madras Mahajana Sabha* in 1881 for social reforms and national awakening.
7. In 1875 Sishir Kumar Ghosh established the India League for the same purpose and in 1885 the Bombay Presidency Association was formed.
8. However, among all these associations, the most active association was the Indian Association formed by Surendra Nath Banerjee and Anand Mohan Bose in 1876 which aimed at forming a strong public opinion, organising people of all castes and creeds, bringing Hindus and Muslims together and taking cooperation of the common people in public agitations.
9. The Indian Association opposed the Arms Act, the Vernacular Press Act and reduction of age-limit for the candidates of Civil Services.

10. In 1883 and again in 1885 it organised the Indian National Conference at Calcutta.

11. Thus, even prior to the founding of the Indian National Congress, the Indians attempted to organise national consciousness on a common platform, and succeeded to some extent.

Q. 2. Discuss the social basis of the Indian National Movement.

Or

Do you think that the Indian National Movement was simply the creation of English-educated middle class ?

Lord Dufferin, the then governor-general, in 1888 described the All India Congress as the body representing only a 'microscopic minority of India's vast population'. He maintained that it represented only the western-educated class of the Indians. Many scholars, both Indian and foreign also accepted that the national movement, under the leadership of the All India Congress, was mostly the creation of the educated Indian middle class. It is correct to an extent. Yet it is not the complete truth. The idea has been rightly challenged by many modern Indian scholars. It would be wrong to say that the All India Congress and the national movement represented only a particular class of people. Of course, the seventy-two representatives who met at the first session of the Congress in 1885 belonged exclusively to Indian English-educated class. But its pattern changed the very next year. Next year, four hundred seventy-four representatives who attended its session belonged to different classes of people. Thus, even at the initial stage, the Congress no more remained a representative body of a particular class and therefore, the national movement, carried on under its leadership, did not remain restricted to a particular class. Dr. A. R. Desai has expressed the opinion that 'all the new social classes in India gradually attained national character, each developed the consciousness of common interest and, therefore, though each pursued their respective class movements on an all India scale, yet each participated in the national struggle under a common banner'.

Dr. A. R. Desai, in his book, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* has described many new social classes which evolved during the British rule in India. He writes that in agrarian areas these new classes were the *Zamindars*, absentee landlords, tenants, peasant proprietors, modern class of marchants and modern money-lenders, while in urban areas these were the modern class of capitalists, the working class, petty shopkeepers, traders, the professional classes such as doctors, technicians, lawyers, teachers, journalists, clerks, etc., consisting of intelligentsia and the educated middle class as well. Among these classes, national consciousness was first awakened in the intelligentsia and, thereby, the people among this class became the pioneers in all progressive social, religious, economic, political and cultural movements. Then national consciousness evolved in other classes as well except the *Zamindars* and the propertied classes.

All of them gradually realised that interests, basically economic interests, could not be protected under the foreign rule. Therefore national freedom and democratic government became the objective of all. Even the Indian capitalists felt that their interests too would be defended only by a national government and, therefore, they too came to the support of the national movement. Thus, barring exceptions, all social and economic classes of India supported the national movement and therefore, after 1918 it gradually became a mass movement supported by all the classes.

The same view has been expressed by Dr. Bipin Chandra in his book, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*. He has expressed the view that it would be wrong to assume that the Indian nationalist writers, publicmen, thinkers, journalists etc. belonged to the Indian middle class. They, rather, were the intellectual representatives of new Indian classes and Indian nationalism. He, therefore, has opined that Indian nationalism was not the handmaid of a particular class but the result of a common consciousness informing all classes of India. Thus, Indian nationalism had much wider social basis than that of a particular class though, of course, it was led by Indian intellectuals, thinkers and philosophers of that time. However, Dr. Bipin Chandra has pointed out one major weakness of the national movement. He has expressed the view that the economic outlook of the Indian leadership was basically capitalist. It was not that Indian leadership was espoused by the capitalists, but because the leadership genuinely believed that industrial development of India along capitalist lines was the only way to regenerate the country in the economic field.

Thus, most of the modern scholars believe that the national movement was not the offspring of the mind of a particular class whether capitalists or the educated middle class, though, of course, the English-educated middle class largely inspired it, intellectuals among them provided leadership to it and, later on, capitalists supported it. It had a wider social consciousness which practically embraced all classes of people in India. That is why the Indian national leaders always remained above the narrow group, class or sectional interests. Rising above narrow politics, the Indian national leaders concerned themselves mainly with the general welfare of the Indian people and, therefore, attempted to represent the interests of all classes of the Indian society justifying the contention that Indian nationalism had its roots in the social consciousness of all classes of the Indian people.

Points to Remember

1. In 1888, Lord Dufferin described the All India Congress as the body representing only a 'microscopic minority of India's vast population'.
2. Many scholars also upheld the view that the Congress was mostly the creation of the educated middle class.

3. But it is not the complete truth because in its very next annual session, its 474 members represented different classes of Indian people.
4. Dr. A. R. Desai has maintained that many new social classes like modern class of merchants and money-lenders in rural areas and capitalists, workers, traders, professional classes (Doctors, Engineers, teachers, etc.) in Urban areas evolved during the British rule and all of them gradually developed national consciousness though intellectuals, certainly, provided leadership to them.
5. All these classes gradually realised that their economic interests could not be safeguarded under a foreign rule and, therefore, came to the support of the national movement.
6. Dr. Bipin Chandra too in his book, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* has expressed the view that Indian nationalism was not the handmaid of a particular class but the result of a common consciousness among all classes of India though, of course, it was led by intellectuals.
7. Thus, most of the modern scholars believe that the Indian National movement had a wider social consciousness which practically covered all classes of Indian people and that is why national leaders always remained above narrow groupings or class interests.

Q. 3. "The Congress was established as 'a safety valve' for the British rule in India". How far do you agree with this view ?

Or

Discuss the causes which led to the establishment of All India Congress in 1885 A.D.

Or

When and why was the All India Congress founded ? What were its early aims ?

It is difficult to say as to how the idea of establishing the Congress originated. According to some people, the *Delhi Durbar* held in 1877 A.D. gave birth to this idea. But, most probably, the *Delhi Durbar* suggested the idea of National Conference and not that of the Congress to Surendra Nath Banerjee. Another view that seventeen Indians who attended the Theosophical Convention at Madras explored the idea of the Congress as has been discussed in Mrs. Anne Besant's book, *How India Wrought for Freedom.* But, the generally accepted view is that the Indian National Association formed by Allan Octavian Hume (A. O. Hume) was instrumental in convening the Congress. The fact is that the idea of having an All India organisation had struck the minds of several Indians but it was given a concrete shape by a British retired civil servant, Mr. A. O. Hume.

Thus, the primary credit for establishing the All India

Congress has gone to Mr. A. O. Hume. On March 1, 1883 he wrote an open letter to the students of Calcutta University asking at least fifty among them to come forward to make every sacrifice in the service of their motherland. Initially, Mr. Hume desired that important people from all over India should meet once a year to discuss social affairs with a view to improving them. Later on, he met Lord Dufferin, the then governor-general of India who, probably, advised him to form an association which might function on the model of opposition party in Britain so that improvement could be made in the administration. Mr. Hume then went to Britain and discussed the matter with several British leaders. He also organized the Indian Parliamentary Committee there which aimed at developing interest of the members of the British Parliament in Indian affairs. After his return from Britain, Mr. Hume made efforts to establish an All India organisation and eminent Indians from different places were invited to meet at Poona from 25th to 28th December 1885. However, as Poona became infected with Cholera, the vanue of the meeting was shifted to Bombay. There, the first session of the All India Congress began on 28th December 1885 at Gokul Das Tej Pal Sanskrit College. It was presided over by an eminent barrister of Calcutta, Mr. Womesh Chandra Banerjee.

Some controversy prevails about the object which prompted Mr. Hume to take this step. The one view is that the Congress was to provide an outlet—"a safety valve" for the British rule in India. Mr. Hume himself accepted it. He observed : "A safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces generated by our own action was urgently needed." In fact, the administration of Lord Lytton had created widespread discontent in India and violent incidents had taken place at several places, *e.g.*, the peasants revolted in Maharashtra in 1879 under the leadership of Vasudeva Balwant Phadke and the Moplahs revolted several times in Malabar during the period 1882-85. Mr. Hume felt that the only way for checking these violent revolts was to provide an alternative platform to the Indians, particularly the educated ones, for expressing their grievances. Lala Lajpat Rai also wrote in his book, *Young India* that "the main reason for founding the Indian National Congress was the anxiety of the progenitors to prevent the disruption of the Empire." However, the first President of the Congress, Mr. W. C. Banerjee and the biographer of Mr. Hume, Mr. W. Wedderburn claimed that the final form of the Congress had resulted from discussion between Mr. Hume and the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. They expressed the view that Lord Dufferin advised Mr. Hume to organise a political body which would act in the same way as the opposition party did in Britain, otherwise Mr. Hume simply desired to establish an All-India body to discuss matters of social reform. That is why R. Palme Dutt commented that 'the Congress was the result of a presettled and secret plan of the British government.' Dr. Nand Lal Chatterjee gave another reason which prompted Mr.

Hume to establish an All India Organisation. He asserted that the Congress was established as a precautionary measure against an apprehended Russian invasion on India. It has also been suggested by certain scholars that Mr. Hume wanted to take 'the steam out of Surendra Nath Banerjee's ship by starting a parallel organisation and took care to associate with it only moderate and loyal elements.' There is no doubt as well that Surendra Nath Banerjee and the leaders of Calcutta were, certainly, more radical as compared to the early leaders of the Congress and Mr. Hume, therefore, desired to keep the strings of the political activity in his hands instead of allowing it to drfit under the control of more radical leaders who could trouble the British administration. That is why, the first session of the Congress was held at the same time when Indian National Association was having its session at Calcutta and S. N. Banerjee was not invited to attend the first session of the Congress though he had already assumed the role of an eminent leader in Indian politics. All these opinions support the view that one of the primary objects of Mr. Hume in founding the Congress was to provide an outlet, *i.e.*, 'a safety valve' for the British rule in India though it cannot be ascertained correctly that it was primarily aimed at checking the violent activities of the Indians or because of the advice of Viceroy Dufferin or fear of Russian attack or the necessity of outdoing the efforts of S. N. Banerjee. Lord Dufferin disowned every responsibility in founding the Congress ; the view of Dr. Chatterjee that the Congress was brought into being as a precautionary move against the impending invasion of Russia needs further positive evidences and the view that the necessity of founding the Congress arose with the view to outdoing the efforts of S. N. Banerjee and Calcutta leaders explains only a partial truth. It is more nearer the truth that Mr. Hume as well as many other English officials felt that in the absence of an all-India organisation, the Indian national movement, probably, would grow on violence and therefore, desired to provide a constitutional outlet to the discontent of the Indians, particularly the educated among them, by founding the All India Congress. Thus, it, of course, meant 'a safety valve'.

Yet, the theory of 'a safety valve' does not consist of the complete truth. Another largely accepted view is that besides being 'a safety valve', the Congress was the result of the urge of the politically conscious Indians to work for the political and economic advancement of their motherland. Had it not been so, people like Dada Bhai Nauroji, W. C. Banerjee, Feroz Shah Mehta and Mahadeva Govinda Ranade would not have cooperated with Mr. Hume in his tasks. Besides, Mr. Hume himself was governed by a higher ideal than a 'safety valve' in founding the Congress. Mr. Hume sincerely loved India and had a mystical faith in its destiny and its future greatness and spiritual superiority. It was clear from his open letter addressed to the students of Calcutta University. Lala Lajpat Rai in his book, *Young India*, testified the noble intentions of Mr.

Hume, Dr. Ishwari Prasad has also expressed the view that the Congress was founded for the welfare of the Indians. Thus, it is believed that Mr. Hume was genuinely interested in the welfare of the Indian people and the Indian leaders who cooperated with him in founding the Congress were also patriots and men of high character. These leaders were guided by the motives of the welfare of their country. They wholeheartedly supported Mr. Hume in founding such an all-India organisation as they did not want to rouse official hostility towards their efforts at so early a stage of political activity. They rightly believed that the efforts of a senior British officer like Mr. Hume would not be doubted by the government and there would be no opposition to forming a political organisation like the Congress.

Many distinguished personalities of Indian politics like Dada Bhai Nauroji, Feroz Shah Mehta, Dinsha Wacha, Kashi Nath Telang, Narayan Ganesh, etc. participated in the first session of the Congress. Besides, some government officials like Sir William Wedderburn and Mahadeva Govinda Ranade were also present there as it had the blessings of the government as well. The Congress initiated its function most moderately. It formulated the following objects in its first session :

(a) To bring closer all those people from every part of India who were sincerely devoted to the welfare of India.

(b) To protect and enhance the feeling of unity among all Indians without distinction of caste, religion, province etc.

(c) To collect all those opinions concerning society which were properly deliberated by the educated Indians, and

(d) To fix up those aims and means which were to be adopted by Indian politicians for the welfare of India.

Besides, it passed certain resolutions which were to be placed before the government in form of petitions. The resolutions requested the government to abolish the India Council, to hold the Indian Civil Service Examination in India as well, to increase the age-limit for appearing in the I. C. S. examination, to have elected members in legislative assemblies and to establish legislative assemblies in North-West Frontier Province, Avadh and Punjab. Thus, the Congress started functioning as an all-India organisation from 1885 with very modest objectives.

Points to Remember

1. The *Delhi Durbar* of 1877 and the Theosophical Convention held at Madras did not originate the idea of forming the Congress.

2. The credit of organising the Congress went to Mr. A. O. Hume who first addressed an open letter to the students of the Calcutta University, had discussions with Lord Dufferin, discussed the matters with several British leaders, organised an

Indian Parliamentary Committee in Britain and then called a meeting of eminent persons in India at Poona though, afterwards, held it at Bombay in 1885.

3. Many scholars have upheld the view that the Congress was organised as a 'safety-valve' for the British rule in India.

4. Some revolutionary activities, probably the advice of Lord Dufferin, fear of Russian invasion or the desire of snatching away the leadership of the Indians from the hands of radical S. N. Banerjee and organising the moderate Indians under one banner, motivated Mr. Hume to organise the Congress.

5. Thus, it is a fact that one aim in organising the Congress was to provide safety to British rule in India.

6. But more than that it was the result of the urge of the politically conscious Indians to work for the political and economic advancement of their motherland and that was the reason that Mr. Hume got support from patriotic Indian leaders in his efforts.

7. Besides, Mr. Hume loved India and had a mystical faith in its destiny and that also prompted him to organise the Congress.

8. Many distinguished Indian leaders including government officers attended the first session of the Congress.

9. The Congress's early aims were to bring all Indians closer devoted towards the welfare of India, to enhance unity among all Indians without any distinctions of caste, religion, province, etc. to collect opinions of educated Indians and to fix up aims and means for the welfare of India.

10. Besides, it passed resolutions concerning abolition of India Council, having elective member in legislative assemblies, enhancement of age limit for Central Services, etc. which were to be placed before the government as petitions.

8

THE MODERATES : THEIR OBJECTIVES, TECHNIQUES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Q. 1. What do you know about the objectives and techniques of the Moderates ?

Or

What do you know about the objectives and techniques of the All-India Congress during the first twenty years of its life ?

During the first twenty years of its life, the Congress was completely controlled by liberal leaders or the so-called Moderates. It started with modest objectives, having faith in the honesty and sincerity of the British government. Besides, it knew that if it would annoy the government of India, it might go against its interest. Therefore, its leaders kept themselves under perfect restraint. They did not expect it to function as a political party like the Liberal or Conservative parties in Britain. Mr. A. O. Hume who was largely responsible for the birth of the Congress desired its functioning mostly on the model of Irish Home Rule Movement which simply sought autonomy in internal affairs under the British suzerainty. For Mr. Hume, regeneration of the Indian people could be possible under the care of enlightened British imperialism. The moderate leaders of the Congress were united with Mr. Hume regarding this belief. Having faith in the sincerity of the British government, they remained loyal to it and kept themselves and the Congress well within constitutional limits.

The Congress, during these early years, desired to encourage and consolidate the spirit of Indian nationalism among the people of all faiths, castes and religions, to regenerate the Indian society in all fields—mental, moral, social and political and to bring Britain and India closer by removal of injustice done to the Indians mostly by British bureaucrats in India. Besides, as it believed that the British people and the government were ignorant of Indian affairs, it attempted to enlighten British public opinion and the members of the British Parliament by carrying its message to Britain itself. For that purpose, the Congress deputed a delegation to visit Britain in 1890. The delegation did some useful work in Britain. It was able to constitute a committee of the members of the House of Commons to deliberate Indian affairs. A newspaper titled *India* was also started in Britain which, later on, became a weekly one. They also

toured various places in England, delivered lectures and distributed pamphlets among the people concerning Indian affairs. Thus, an attempt was made by the Congress for moulding British public opinion in India's favour.

During these early years, the Congress demanded several reforms from the government and accordingly passed resolutions in its various sessions. These demands were largely as follows :

(a) A Royal Commission should be appointed to examine the Indian administration.

(b) India council should be abolished.

(c) The number of members of the legislative councils at the Centre and in the provinces should be increased ; they should be conceded more rights ; and, decisions should be taken by the majority vote.

(d) Military expenditure should be reduced.

(e) Import and export duties should be imposed which would be favourable to India's interests.

(f) The Civil Services Examination should be held in India also and its age limit should be increased.

(g) Local bodies should be granted wider rights.

(h) Efforts should be made to promote industrial growth of India.

(i) Interests of the Indians living abroad should be protected.

(j) Judiciary should be separated from the executive.

(k) Salt tax should be reduced.

(l) Efforts should be made to check the exploitation of peasants by landlords.

(m) Indian Press should be granted wider freedom.

(n) Facilities for third class railway passengers should be augmented.

(o) Efforts should be made to know the reasons of India's poverty and remedial measures should be taken to remove it.

(p) More technical and professional colleges should be opened.

(q) Schools for military training should be established.

(r) Agricultural banks should be opened which should provide loans to peasants on lesser interest, etc.

These were the basic demands of the Congress during its early years although gradually elaborated and broadened in due course.

The early nationalists or the Moderates were loyal to the

British government and, in no way, desired to alienate themselves from it. They had faith in the British sense of justice as well. They believed that the British government was simply ignorant of Indian problems and once it would come to know them, it would certainly take measures to remove them. In 1896, the Congress President, Rahim Tulla observed : "A more honest and sturdy nation does not exist under the Sun than the English nation." Dada Bhai Nauroji expressed himself several times : "I believe that the British would leave India on their own." They believed that India has benefitted in many ways under the British administration and so it should continue to keep good relations with Britain for its future progress. Of course, the Moderates desired self-rule for India and regarded it natural and necessary, but they were not prepared to break up ties with Britain. Besides, they believed that self-rule was neither possible nor desirable immediately. Therefore, they favoured gradual reforms, their demands remained moderate and the means to achieve them very well within constitutional limits.

The demands or the programme of the Moderates can be divided under the following heads for the sake of convenience :

1. *Civil Rights* : The Moderates realised the value of the freedom of press and speech, the right to organise processions and public meetings and, therefore, protested against those measures of the government which curtailed them. That is why they asked for the separation of judiciary and executive and removal of the Vernacular Press Act.

2. *Administrative* : The Congress, under the leadership of the Moderates, year by year, urged the government to remove certain administrative abuses and run public welfare schemes. It opposed the passing of the Calcutta Corporation Act by Lord Curzon and asked for more representative local-self governments with wider powers. It asked the government to undertake public welfare schemes, develop agricultural banks, increase facilities for irrigation, health facilities, improve police system and better primary, higher and technical education. It demanded trial by jury. It asked for the removal of Arms Act passed during the viceroyalty of Lord Lytton. It also raised its voice against the exploitation of Indian labour working in plantations in India as well as those who had gone in different foreign countries.

3. *Constitutional* : The Moderates did contemplate on complete independence for India. They simply demanded larger number of elected representatives in legislatures, both at the Centre and in provinces and enhancement of their powers, particularly concerning financial matters. The Congress, under their leadership, asked for Indian representation in the India Council at London and also in the Executive Councils at the Centre and in the provinces of Bombay and Madras. In 1904 it demanded representation in the British House of Commons as well. The Moderates demanded Indian representation in different bodies because they felt that it would provide the Indians

an opportunity to get acquainted with the functioning of democratic government. Besides, they believed that the government would also be benefitted by the advice and aspirations of the Indian representatives in different bodies. However, when the Moderates felt dissatisfied with the reforms of 1892 and realised that the government was not keen on further reforms, they demanded *Swarajya* or self-government within the British empire on the model of self-governing colonies like Australia and Canada. This demand was made from the Congress platform by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in 1905 and by Dada Bhai Nauroji in 1906.

4. *Economic* : The demands of the Moderates were moderate in respect of other reforms but were revolutionary in the economic sphere. Gradually, they realised that the one worst result of the British rule in India was the extreme poverty of India and the British were primarily responsible for it. Dada Bhai Nauroji propounded the theory of 'Drain of Wealth,' *viz*., the wealth of India was systematically drained out of India by several means. Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Ramesh Chandra Datta also elaborated the causes and the results of the British economic policies in India and, thus, charged the British as well as the Indian government responsible for the poverty of India. The Moderates blamed the British for destruction of Indian indigenous industries, failure of modern industries, growth of agriculture, unfavourable conditions imposed by the government concerning matters of trade and commerce particularly foreign, and the huge drain of wealth from India to Britain which all had, finally, resulted in abject poverty of the Indians. Therefore, they asked the government to stop siphoning off wealth from India, reduce the land revenue and military expenditure, abolish salt tax, promote modern industries and check unfavourable balance of trade by the policy of protective tariffs. They in fact, desired that the economic policies of the government should be pursued in the interest of India and not that of Britain. They, thus, challenged the very foundation of British rule in India. And, when they realised that the government was not prepared to do anything regarding economic reforms, they gradually lost faith in the British sense of justice. That is why, the Moderates were forced to demand *Swarajya* and that was also one of the causes of the rise of extremism within the Congress. Feeling disgusted with the attitude of the government, they propounded the idea of the use of *Swadeshi* goods and to boycott the foreign goods. In 1896 the students in Poona and several other towns in Maharashtra publicly burnt foreign goods. The *Swadeshi* and boycott were also accepted as means to protest against the partition of Bengal in 1905.

During the period 1885-1905 some of the leaders of the Moderates within the Congress were Dada Bhai Nauroji, Pheroz Shah Mehta, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Badruddin Tyabji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Ramesh Chandra Datta, Moti Lal Ghosh, Dinshaw E. Wacha, Madan Mohan Malaviya etc. Most of these leaders believed in constitutional methods to achieve their

aims and those who did not believe in them preferred to accept them as a matter of expediency. Besides, they believed that British connections were useful to India and, therefore, did not desire to get rid of them. Therefore, the Congress under their leadership pursued only limited objectives and, for achieving them, its techniques remained well within the Constitutional limits. It attempted to rouse the national spirit and political consciousness of the Indians and tried to unite them on political questions. It also attempted to rouse the sympathy of the British people and the Indian government towards genuine grievances of the Indians. It, therefore, sent several deputations to Britain and attempted to convert British public opinion in favour of its demands. It limited its activities to holding meetings, passing resolutions at its annual sessions and sending petitions to the government of India and the British Parliament or Crown. It never protested against the government and limited its activities within the existing laws whether just or unjust.

Points to Remember

1. During the period 1885-1905, the Congress was led by the Moderates.
2. The Moderates had complete faith in the British sense of justice and, therefore, functioned within constitutional limits.
3. The Congress attempted to regenerate Indian society in all fields of life and enlighten British public opinion and Parliament concerning Indian affairs.
4. The Congress demanded several reforms from the government, *e.g.*, appointment of a royal commission, reduction in military expenditure, protecting import and export duties, industrialisation of India, separation of judiciary and executive, freedom of Press, reduction of revenue, opening of technical and professional colleges, checking of exploitation of peasants, etc.
5. The Congress asked for defence of Civil rights like freedom of Press and speech, sought several administrative reforms like development of agricultural banks, improvement in police-system, trial by jury, better arrangement for education, desired certain constitutional reforms like representation of Indians in India Council, British House of Commons and in the executives of the governor-general and governors and emphasised on introducing economic reforms like reduction of salt tax, checking of unfavourable balance of trade and drain of wealth from India, etc.
6. As such, gradually, the Moderate leaders lost their faith in British sense of justice and were forced to demand *Swarajya* and propounded the idea of the use of *Swadesi* goods later on.
7. Dada Bhai Nauroji, Pheroz Shah Mehta, S. N. Banerjee, G. K. Gokhale, M. G. Ranade, R. C. Datta, Madan Mohan Malviya were some of the prominent leaders of the Moderates.

8. The Congress under the leadership of the Moderates limited its activities within the existing laws whether just or unjust.

Q. 2. What do you know about the reaction of the government towards the Congress during its early period ?

Many scholars have opined that one of the primary objects of Mr. A. O. Hume in founding the Congress was to provide an outlet, 'a safety valve' for the British rule in India. Mr. Hume himself had accepted it. He had observed : "A safety valve for the escape of great and growing forces generated by our own action was urgently needed." It has also been said that Mr. A. O. Hume was desirous of establishing an organisation to discuss only social problems of India with a view to finding out their solution for the betterment of the Indian society. It was only on the advice of the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin that he included political objectives in the objectives of the Congress though Lord Dufferin, of course, denied it later on. However, it is clear that the government did nothing to prevent the establishment of the Congress. On the contrary, it extended its patronage to it to a certain extent. That is why, in 1886, when the Congress met for its annual session at Calcutta, its delegates were formally welcomed by Lord Dufferin at a reception party. The cordiality was repeated by the governor of Madras in 1887 when the Congress met for its annual session there. Thus it is clear that the government did not doubt the intentions of the Congress in the initial stage. Rather, it welcomed the founding of the Congress and, thus, expressed its faith in the theory of 'safety valve'.

But the attitude of the government towards the Congress changed very soon. Later in 1888 the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin expressed his dissatisfaction with the Congress. In fact, the working of the Congress belied the hopes of the government. The Congress grew popular very soon. The number of delegates at its annual sessions increased by representing Indians of all types of opinions, regions and communities. Thus, it developed a national image very soon. Of course, its leadership remained in the hands of western educated middle class : nevertheless, it represented national interests, projected a popular image and claimed that its cause was the cause of the common people of India. Besides, the Congress started criticising government officials and their functioning, though, in the same breath, expressing faith in the justice of the British government. It was all distasteful to the British officials in India. The government of India had hoped that the Congress would be an easy instrument in its hands in tackling any violent upsurge in India. Of course, the Congress declared its adherence to constitutional means but its popular image, growing popularity among all Indians and its postures against the Indian government posed a threat to British Imperialism and the British government in India did not fail to realise it very soon. Thereafter, the government took measures to obstruct the functioning of the Congress. Lord

Dufferin ordered that no government servant would help in collecting donations for the Congress. He also ordered that no government servant would participate in the proceedings of the Congress even as a visitor. Thus, the government became suspicious about the Congress from the very beginning and took measures for checking its popularity and activities.

Afterwards, the government took certain positive steps to check the Congress's move for national integration. The government adopted the policy of 'divide and rule', gave encouragement to communalism, particularly Hindu and Muslim classes and supported pro-British people like *Raja* Shiva Prasad and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to organise anti-Congress forums and movements. It also attempted to pit all conservative, reactionary and vested interests against the Congress. The native rulers, the landlords, the rich and the privileged classes were advised by the government to keep away from the Congress as it would be in their larger interest because the Congress would hit their social and economic privileges. Thus, the government took all possible measures for checkmating the Congress and curtailing its growing popularity. People like *Raja* Shiva Prasad and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan gave all possible support to the measures adopted by the government. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established *Mohammedan Education Conference* and *United Patriotic Association* for the same purpose. The first one aimed at keeping the Muslims away from the Congress and the other one aimed at bringing both the Hindu and Muslim landlords on one platform with a view to supporting the government against the designs of the Congress.

The government continued to be hostile to the Congress always and people like Lord Curzon despised it openly even when the Congress leadership was in the hands of Moderates. But, at the same time, the government gradually realised the growing strength of the Congress and felt the necessity of avoiding confrontation to a certain extent. The India Council Act of 1892 was passed primarily with this aim in view. This policy of distrust on the Congress, as well as maintaining balance continued to prevail with the government till the achievement of independence by India.

Points to Remember

1. A. O. Hume's one aim in founding the Congress was the safety of the British empire in India and, probably, he included political objectives in the aims of the Congress on the advice of Lord Dufferin though he denied it.
2. But the Congress met no opposition from the government in the beginning.
3. On the contrary, Lord Dufferin welcomed the delegates of the Congress at a reception party in 1886 at Calcutta and the governor of Madras did the same in 1887.

4. But from 1888 onwards, the attitude of Lord Dufferin and the Government changed.
5. The growing popularity of the Congress and its postures against the Indian government posed a threat to British imperialism and, therefore, the government took measures to obstruct the functioning of the Congress.
6. Afterwards, the government encouraged Hindu and Muslim communalism and organised all conservative, reactionary and vested interests against the Congress.
7. People like Raja Shiva Prasad and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan supported the government in its efforts.
8. The government, thus, became hostile to the Congress very soon, yet, felt the necessity of keeping it unagitated, and one of its result was the passing of the Act of 1892.

Q. 3. What had been the contribution of the early nationalists or the so-called moderates towards the national movement ?

Or

Discuss the achievements of the Moderates.

The early nationalists or the so-called Moderates kept hold of the Congress up to 1916. They had faith in the intentions of the British, owed complete loyalty to the British, were not prepared to sever the relations of India with Britain, pursued the path of petitions and passing resolutions every year with a view to organizing public opinion and drawing the attention of the British public and Parliament towards the genuine grievances of the Indians with expectation that these would be removed if brought to the notice of their Masters and, in no way, were prepared to protest against the government so much so that many of the moderate leaders refused to be a party to the boycott of foreign goods and use of *Swadeshi* during the course of agitation against the partition of Bengal. However, within the Congress itself, a group of people realised the futility of the ideology and techniques of the Moderates and formed a group of people which were called the Extremists. It resulted in the split of the Congress in 1907 at Surat where the Moderates succeeded in turning out the Extremists from the Congress. But ultimately, the politics of the country favoured the Extremists. The two groups of the Congress were reunited in 1916. But then, it was the Congress dominated by the Extremists. The Moderates detached themselves from the Congress and formed a separate party, called the *Indian Liberal Federation.* But that party remained insignificant in Indian politics.

The early nationalists or the Moderates have been criticized by many scholars. Even their contemporaries, the Extremists within the Congress, also criticized them on grounds of their objectives, techniques and achievements. The extremists rejected the objective of Colonial form of self-government and fixed up *Swaraj* or complete independence as their goal. They rejected the techniques of the

Moderates as well. Petitioning was rejected as mad and fanastic because as Aurobindo Ghosh put it, 'it was not in human nature that one people would sacrifice their interests for the sake of others ; and, the technique of 'self-development and self-help' was rejected as vague and inadequate. They described the techniques of the Moderates as 'political beggary'. One of the extremist leaders, Lala Lajpat Rai opined : "At best we can describe it as political opportunism. It has encouraged hypocricy and treachery against the country. It has provided certain people the facility to trade in the garb of patriotism." It has also been asserted that the Moderates failed to gain anything substantial from the government. They could get the government to appoint a public Service Commission in 1886 and the Indian Council Act was passed in 1892 because of their pressure. But these were no meaningful results and the Moderates themselves regarded them as unsatisfactory. Dr. Bipan Chandra has probed and described the reasons of their failure. He has opined that 'the Moderates failed because of their wrong beliefs'. He has expressed his view that 'their methods of political work and agitation were, probably, responsible for their failure but more than that their failure lay in not breaking through the twin beliefs that British rule was invincible and that the capitalist mode of production was the only one possible.' There is no doubt as well that the early nationalist leaders of the Congress belonged to the rich and educated class and their social status limited their objectives and techniques. Their idea that 'it was in the interest of India to continue relations with Britain, the British would provide justice to Indians and train Indians in the art of self-government,' etc. were absolutely wrong. They gradually realised it as well but failed to change their beliefs. Besides, many among the Moderates accepted several privileges granted by the government and as G. N. Singh has observed : "none among the Moderate leaders except G. K. Gokhale was prepared to sacrifice personal comforts and accept hardships of life for the sake of independence." In such circumstances nothing much could be exepcted from the Moderates.

Yet, it would be wrong to conclude that the Moderates contributed nothing towards the national movement and the period of their leadership had all gone to waste. In its early period, the Congress and its leaders could not afford the path of confrontation with the government. The Congress had to be moderate in its objectives and techniques. Otherwise, the government would have attempted to curb its activities and the movement could have been suppressed in its initial stage. Thus, to be moderate in their ambitions was a matter of expediency with the early nationalist leaders. It can also not be denied that the Moderates were truly patriots and national welfare was their first priority. Besides, their efforts, certainly, brought about certain tangible results. Even Dr. Bipan Chandra, who charged the Moderates with wrong beliefs, has credited them with several achievements. He has observed, "The accomplishments of the national leaders of this period are many, although the success is not

measured in terms of immediate gain." And, this is the correct approach regarding the accomplishments of the Moderates. The immediate gains of the Moderates were insignificant but their contribution towards political and national awakening was of permanent value to India. The Moderates exposed the evils of the British bureaucracy and its administration. According to Dr. Bipin Chandra their foremost contribution in this field was to expose the true nature of British economic imperialism and its evil effects on India. Dada Bhai Nauroji was the first person who by his speeches and writings cleared the fact that the worst result of the British rule in India was the extreme poverty of the Indian people. He was also the first one who propounded the theory of 'Drain of Wealth' and, thus, proved as to how the wealth of India was siphoned off from the country. The Moderates imparted political education as well to the Indians. They propagated the ideas of liberty, democracy, self-government, etc. among the Indians and by forming the Congress, provided them a platform for the discussion of national issues and their solutions. They, thus, helped in organising a strong public opinion as well, against the British rule in India. However, the best achievement of the Congress and its Moderate leaders was to awaken the feelings of Indian nationalism among the people. From the very beginning, the Congress attempted to bring together people of all regions, castes, communities, religions, etc. on its platform and largely succeeded. Thus, it formed the basis of a strong Indian nationalism which served as a bedrock for a vigorous national movement in the coming years. Sri K. M. Munshi expressed : "If there had been no all-India organization (the Congress) functioning for more than thirty years, none of the great movements led by Gandhiji would have had any chance of success." Thus, the best success of the Moderates lay in inculcating a feeling among the Indians that India was a nation and they all belonged to it and, thus, paved the way of a strong national movement. Besides, the Indian Council Act of 1892 was the outcome from their efforts which formed the basis of further constitutional reforms.

Points to Remember

1. The Moderates kept hold of the Congress up to 1916, believed in the British sense of justice so much so that many of their leaders refused to be a party to the boycott of foreign goods during the course of agitation against the partition of Bengal.
2. It resulted in the split of the Congress in 1907 at Surat because, being dissatisfied with the policy of the Moderates, a group was formed within the Congress whose members were called the Extremists.
3. But the Extremists got hold of the Congress only in 1916.
4. The Moderates have been criticised by many scholars and were criticised even by their contemporaries.
5. The Extremists described the techniques of the Moderates as

'political beggary'. Lala Lajpat Rai described it as 'political opportunism' and Aurobindo Ghosh as 'vague and inadequate'.

6. The Extremists, therefore, fixed up *Swaraj* as their goal.
7. It has been expressed that the Moderates failed to gain anything substantial from the government.
8. Dr. Bipin Chandra has described the reasons of their failure as well.
9. He expressed that the primary reasons of their failure were in not breaking through the twin beliefs that British rule was invincible and the capitalist mode of production was the only one possibility.
10. Besides, he expressed that the continuing relations with Britain and having faith that the British would do justice to them were also wrong.
11. Yet, the Moderates had many achivements to their credit.
12. They avoided the path of confrontation with the government for the safety of their movement at the initial stage, exposed the true nature of British economic imperialism, provided political education to the Indians, propagated the ideas of liberty, self-government and democracy, helped in organizing public opinion against the British rule, and awakened the feeling of Indian nationalism.
13. Thus, though the immediate gains of the Moderates were insignificant but their contribution towards political and national awakening was of permanent value to India.
14. Besides, the Act of 1892 which was one of the results of their efforts formed the basis of further constitutional reforms in India.

9

THE EXTREMISTS : THEIR OBJECTIVES, TECHNIQUES AND ACHIEVEMENTS (THE SURAT SPLIT)

Q. 1. What were the causes of the rise of extremism or militant nationalism in Indian politics ?

The Cougress, under the leadership of the Moderates, started having complete faith in good intentions of the British government. The Moderates desired to bring about certain constitutional, economic and administrative reforms and defence of civil rights for the Indians. It was only in 1905 that they demanded self-government for India and that too wtthin the British empire. Their method to achieve their objective also remained limited upto passing resolutions year after year and submitting petitions to the government. Yet, within the Congress, some people realised the futility of the ideology and techniques of the Moderates and formed a group called the Extremists. The Extremists preferred not to get out of the Congress but to capture it from within. They represented aggressive Indian nationalism and became responsible for the split of the Congress in 1907 at Poona. Several factors contributed to the rise of extremism or militant nationalism in the national movement. Some of them were as follows :

(*a*) *Exposure of the true nature of the British Rule* : Gradually, the Indians, the Congress and its leadership realised the true nature of the British rule. 'The British rule was primarily responsible for the poverty of the Indians, the British would never give up the interest of Britain for the welfare of India,' 'the British would not grant self-government to India,' the British meant to rule over India either by sword or diplomacy,' etc. became clear to the Indians. Even the Moderates helped in exposing this true nature of the British rule. M. G. Ranade by writing his *Essays in Indian Economics*, Dada Bhai Naoroji by writing *Indian Poverty and Un-British Rule in India.* R. C. Dutt by writing *Economic History of India* and other such writings of other leaders exposed the nature of economic exploitation of the Indians by the British. The moderate leader G. K. Gokhale expressed the view that 'the Indian bureaucracy was selfish and was openly opposed to national ambitions.' The Indian Council Act of 1892 failed to satisfy the aspirations of even the Moderates and the Congress at its annual session in 1893 expressed its dissatisfaction over it.

(*b*) *Dissatisfaction with the ideology and techniques of the Moderates* : Within the Congress itself, a considerable section of the people, particularly the younger element within it felt aggrieved at the policies of the Congress. They felt and articulated that neither the goal of the Congress nor the means to achieve it would lead the country to some tangible results. B. G. Tilak described the Sessions of the Congress as 'the entertainments of holidays' and Lala Lajpat Rai called them 'annual national festivals of the educated Indians'. In 1893, Aurobindo Ghosh in his essays, *New Lamps in place of Old Lamps* published in the magazine *Indu Prakash* severely criticised the objectives and techniques of the Congress. Ashwini Kumar Dutt described the Amravati Session of the Congress in 1897 as 'the Carvinal of Three Days'. Similar views were expressed by Damodar Hari Chapekar, Ravindra Nath Thakur, *Swami* Vivekananda, *Lala* Munshi Ram (later on *Swami* Shraddha Nand) etc. Thus, it became clear that the younger element wiihin the Congress itself had lost faith in the ideology and techniques of the Moderates and was openly expressing its views against them. The younger leaders were convinced that the British rule was unjust, nothing could be expected from the British as a matter of grace and the path of 'political beggary' would not lead them anywhere.

(*c*) *Economic Exploitation of the Indians by the British* : The frustration felt by the Indians in regenerating Indian economy through the government was the primary cause of the rise of Extremism in Indian politics. The impoverishment of the Indians of all sections gradually went on increasing with the passage of years of the British rule. The cultivators suffered because of the revenue policy of the British ; the traders and manufacturers suffered because the government served the interests of the British traders and manufacturers ; the industries could not grow in India because of the exploitative policy of the British ; and, the educated Indians felt frustrated because they could not get useful employment. Gradually, it was realised by all sections of the Indian people that the primary causes of their economic hardships were the policies deliberately pursued by the British in favour of Britain at the cost of India. That resulted in the loss of faith by them in British sense of justice and fair play. Dr. Bipin Chandra has written : "This decadence of faith led to the questioning not only of the results of the British rule but also of its very ways and wherefors : Why had India not progressed materially and why had not the early promise in this respect been realised ? Who was responsible for this failure ? Was the injury done to India inadvertent or deliberate ? In other words, what was the real purpose of British rule, and, as a corollary, could their own faith in its 'Providential' character be reconciled with their current belief that the rule had been materially injurious to India ?" These doubts were raised by Indian leaders of all levels and a strong propaganda was carried on by them against the economic policies of the British. The people, thus, lost faith in the British. This, certainly, helped in

the rise of Extremism in India. The educated Indians were particularly dissatisfied with the British. It was decided by the government that the examination for Indian Civil Services would be held simultaneously in Britain and India. But the decision was not implemented for long. Otherwise too, every effort was made by the British to debar the Indians from higher services. Besides, unemployment among educated Indians was increasing. That created dissatisfaction among educated Indians. That was also one of causes of the rise of Extremism or militant nationalism. A. R. Desai has expressed the view that 'One primary cause of the rise of extremism in India was the political discontent of educated Indians arising out of their unemployment.'

(*d*) *Social and Religious Awakening* : The various social and religious movements of the nineteenth century which had revived the faith of the Indians in their country and culture also strengthened national awakening. *Raja* Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj were pioneers in this field. Then *Swami* Dayanand and his Arya Samaj went ahead and claimed that Hindu culture and religion represented the highest virtues of mankind. Then *Swami* Vivekananda and his Rama Krishna Mission delivered the message of Indian spiritualism to the world. These social and religious reformers created a sense of self-confidence and self-respect among the Indians. These reformers and their organisations not only revived the glory of Indian culture but also taught the Indians to love their motherland. The Indians forgot their inferiority complex and stood to face the challenge of the western culture and finally British administration. The extremist leaders Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, etc. were, certainly, influenced by the ideas of these social and religious reformers and they, therefore, mixed up religion with politics to a certain extent to inspire and organise the common people of India. *Swami* Vivekananda had observed : "The only hope of India is the Indian masses because the upper classes are virtually dead, physically and morally." The lesson was learnt by the Extremists and therefore, they attempted to get the cooperation of the Indian masses. All this certainly, helped in the growth of militant nationalism or extremism in Indian politics.

(*e*) *The Famine and the Plague* : India, between the period 1876-1900, suffered from famine by eighteen times out of which the famine of 1896-97 was the worst. And, then came the plague which covered a very wide part of Bombay province. The measures of the government to provide relief to the people during these natural calamities proved inadequate and sometimes insulting, particularly the entry of the soldiers in the houses of the citizens to search out the people suffering from plague was very much resented by the people. Bal Gangadhar Tilak protested against it in his newspaper, *Kesri*. Some terrorist activities were also undertaken by the Indians at that time.

(*f*) *Racial Arrogance of the British* : The arrogant and

disrespectful behaviour of the English people is generally towards the Indians and the support of the Anglo-Indian newspapers to their actions also seriously injured the feelings of the Indian people and that also helped the rise of extremism. The English people were haughty in their behaviour with all classes of Indians, merciless in dealing with their Indian servants and dishonoured Indian women whenever they found the opportunity. Inspite the Indians mostly failed to get justice against their oppression. Not only this, the Anglo-Indian newspapers always supported their actions. This was contested by the Vernacular press and that inflamed the sentiments of the Indians, giving rise to militant nationalism.

(*g*) *Oppression of the Indians in British Colonies particularly in South Africa* : The treatment of the British towards the Indians in other British colonies and particularly in South Africa was inhumanes the Indians could not move out of their homes after 9 P.M., could not travel in the first class compartments of trains and, in Transvaal, were registered with finger-prints like ordinary criminals. Many Indians who visited these colonies described the plight of the Indians there and the people felt that it was because of the slavery of India and the only remedy was independence.

(*h*) *Effect of certain events in Foreign Countries* : In 1896, Italy was defeated by Abyssinia and, in 1905 Russia was defeated by Japan. These events falsified the myth that the Europeans were invincible. Besides, at that very time, national movements were taking place in Egypt, Persia and Turkey ; Ireland was fighting for self-government ; and, some success was achieved by the revolutionaries against the government of the Czar in Russia. All these international events inspired and boosted the morale of the Indian nationalists who decided to take bold steps.

(*i*) *The Reactionary Policies of different Viceroys, particularly those of Lord Curzon* : The Conservative Party mostly dominated the British politics during the period 1892-1904 and that affected Indian politics as well. The policies of Lord Landsdowne and Lord Elgin were certainly oppressive. In 1897 B. G. Tilak was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, Chapeker Brothers were sentenced to death on charge of murdering the two Plague Officers and the Natu Brothers were turned out of the country on charge of treason. Lord Curzon was not only oppressive but haughty as well. He tried to centralise the avministration, attacked the University autonomy by passing Indian Universities Act, destroyed the system of local self-government by passing the Calcutta Corporation Act and, worst of all, tried to divide the Hindus and the Muslims by the partion of Bengal. These acts of Curzon created deep resentment among the Indians which led them on to the path of extremism and confrontation with the government.

(*j*) *The Leadership of B. G. Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh* : The militant nationalists or the extremists were led by the so-called Bal, Lal, Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh. These

leaders developed a new political philosophy, gave a new direction to the national movement, inspired self-confidence and self-respect among the Indians and chose the path of passive resistance against the government. Their ideas, messages, boldness and sacrifice instigated the Indian people to move on to a new path. Besides, these leaders attempted to carry their message to the masses. All this helped in the growth of extremism.

(*k*) *The Partition of Bengal* : The most hated measure of Lord Curzon was the partition of Bengal in 1905. The plan of partition was kept secret by the government. Yet, the people had become apprehensive of it. Therefore, the Congress in its annual sessions in 1903 and 1904 had passed resolutions against it. But much against the wishes of the people of Bengal, the plan of partition was implemented in 1905 and some districts of Bengal were included in Assam. The government tried to justify its decision on the basis of administrative convenience. It argued that Bengal was too big a province and, therefore, it would be for the betterment of its administration if its size was reduced. But it was a false argument. The fact was that the government desired to create a Muslim dominated province with a view to dividing the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal. More than that, the government aimed at weakening the growing Indian nationalism by this measure, as Bengal had become the central point of Indian nationalism and activities of the Indian National Congress. Dr. Zacharia has correctly remarked : "The whole purpose and effect of the measure was Machiavellian."

The partition seriously provoked the sentiments of the people of Begnal. In the beginning itself, 2,000 protest meetings were held in Bengal at different places. Afterwards attempts were made to organise the protest on All-India level and the cause of anti-partition movement was taken up not only by the Indian and Anglo-Indian newspapers, but even by the newspapers in Britain like *London Times, Manchester Guardian, Daily News,* etc. The people of Bengal received the news of partition with a great shock. S. N. Banerjee expressed it thus : "The partition announcement fell like a bomb-shall. We felt that we have been insulted, humiliated and tricked. We felt that it was deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of Bengali-speaking people."

The partition plan was implemented on October 16, 1905. In Bengal, that day was celebrated as the day of 'national sorrow'. The people sang *Bande Mataram* in the streets, took dips in the waters of holy Ganges, took oath of brotherhood among one another and a protest meeting was held in the Federation Hall at Calcutta. The Indian newspapers like *Amrita Bazar Patrika, Sanjivani, Hitavadi, Vasumati,* etc. also angrily protested against the partition plan.

The anti-partition movement resulted in the *Swadeshi* Movement, boycott of foreign goods and, finally, in the scheme of national education. The idea of *Swadeshi* originated, probably, in the middle of the 19th century. Most probably *Lokapitvadi* organisation expressed

this idea through the newspaper, *Prabhakhar*. Afterwards several Indian leaders like Raj Narain Bose, Dada Bhai Nauroji, M. G. Ranade, S. N. Banerjee, etc. expressed the view that the Indians should use only India made goods. The view has also been expressed that the word *Swadeshi* was first used by *Swami* Dayanand and, therefore, the leaders of the Arya Samaj emphasized the use of *Swadeshi* goods. When in 1896 custom duty was increased on Indian cotton cloth, protests erupted against it and the people were asked to wear India-made cloth. B. G. Tilak advised the same in 1896 and S. N. Banerjee did likewise in 1902 from the platform of the Congress. However, the movement could not pick up a good momentum at that time.

Now the idea of the boycott of foreign goods was suggested by Krishna Kumar Mitra in his weekly, *Sanjivani* on 13th July 1905. It was, then, suggested by many people in several meetings. Finally, on 7th August 1905, a meeting held in the town-hall of Calcutta, under the Presidentship of S. N. Banerjee passed a resolution in its favour and pleaded with the people to boycott the foreign goods which also meant the use of *Swadeshi* goods.

The boycott and the *Swadeshi* movement became very much popular in Bengal. Mass meetings were held all over Bengal, shops selling foreign goods were picketed, foreign goods were burnt and social boycott was observed against those people who did not support the boycott of foreign goods. Even the poor people participated in it. At several places, the cobblers refused to mend English shoes, the washermen refused washing of foreign clothes and the priests refused to officiate in marriage ceremonies where foreign clothes were used. The government tried to curb this movement by repression. Meetings of the agitators were disrupted, political leaders were confined without trial, shouting of *Bande Mataram* was banned, the Muslims were encouraged to oppose the Hindus, the picketeers were lathi-charged and all sorts of threats were raised against the sympathisers of the movement. Yet, the movement continued up to 1907. S. N. Banerjee toured all over India to gain sympathy of the Indians in other provinces for the movement. The movement, however, slowed down by the first decade of the 20th century and the partition could not be annulled before 1911.

The partition of Bengal and the resultant boycott and *Swadeshi* Movement brought about certain beneficial results in the long run. The ideas of passive resistance against the government and the national education were, certainly, its off shoots. Besides, the greatest benefit flowing out of it was that the anti-partition movement awakened the political consciousness of the people at large and imparted a new and definite shape to the spirit of nationalism. The boycott of foreign goods, the use of *Swadeshi* and the scheme of national education were all accepted by the Extremists in their programme and technique. Thus, it is clear that the partition of Bengal was also a major cause of the rise of extremism or militant nationalism in Indian politics.

Points to Remember

1. Feeling dissatisfied with the aims, policies, and techniques of the Moderates, some people within the Congress formed a group of people called the Extremists.
2. They became responsible for the split of the Congress at Surat in 1907.
3. Exposure of the true nature of the British rule that the British rule was primarily responsible for the poverty of the Indians, dissatisfaction against the ideology and techniques of the Moderates as expressed by people like B. G. Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Rabindra Nath Thakur, *Swami* Vivekananda, etc., economic exploitation of the Indians by the British, social and religious awakening done by the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and allide associations, the Famine and Plague's measures of the government, racial arrogance of the British, oppression of the Indians in British colonies particularly in South Africa, certain events in foreign countries, reactionary policies of different governor-generals particularly those of Lord Curzon, the leadership of B. G. Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh, the partition of Bengal and the resultant boycott and *Swadeshi* Movement were some of the causes of the rise of extremism or militant nationalism in Indian politics.

Q. 2. What do you know about the objectives, techniques and achievements of the Extremists or the militant nationalists ?

Or

Examine the difference between the Moderates and the Extremists in respect of their aims and methods. What had been the contribution of the Extremists towards the national movement ?

Extremism grew within the Congress and the so-called militant nationalists were the young Congressmen. Exposure of the true nature of the British rule, economic exploitation of the Indians by the British, their racial arrogance and faulty policies of the government, certain events which occurred in foreign countries, the partition of Bengal, growing dissatisfaction among the young Congressmen against the ideology, aims and techniques of the Moderates etc. helped in the rise of extremism in the Indian politics and within the Congress itself. Besides Aurobindo Ghosh who provided a philosophy to the Extremists, the militant nationalists were provided leadership by the trio—Bal, Pal and Lal, *viz.* Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and *Lala* Lajpat Rai who all had joined the Congress. The Extremists under their leadership differed from the Moderates in political ideology, objectives and techniques as well but preferred not to leave the Congress but to capture it from within. That finally resulted in the split of the Congress at Surat in 1907 when the Extremists were

turned out of the Congress. But, ultimately, the politics of the country favoured policies of the Extremists and when the two groups of the Congress were united in 1916, the Extremists became dominant in the Congress. The Moderates finally detached themselves from the Congress and formed a separate party called the *Indian Liberal Federation*, which, however, played no effective role in the Indian politics.

The Moderates believed in British sense of fairness and justice, regarded India's relations with Britain beneficial to India and expected that the British would train the Indians in the art of self-government and then one day would grant it to them. However, their hopes were belied. The Congress failed to gain anything substantial from the government for the next twenty years. The provisions of the India Council Act of 1892 were frustrating even to the Moderates. The repressive policy of the government during the anti-partition of Bengal Movement further convinced a large section of the people and the leadership within the Congress that justice could not be expected from the British government. And the exposure of the nature of the economic imperialism of Britain by the Moderates themselves clearly indicated the desirability of change in the aims and policies of the Congress. Yet, the Moderates refused to change anything. But the younger element within the Congress took up the challenge. They clamoured for change, desired to take bold steps and, therefore, were called the Extremists. The Extremists had no faith in British sense of justice, did not expect anything out of the very gradual constitutional reforms and found no good in keeping relations with Britain. Thus, their ideology not only differed from that of the Moderates but was quite opposed to them.

The Extremists differed fundamentally with the Moderates concerning their goal as well. The highest goal fixed by the Moderates at the Congress Session of 1905 was the attainment of Colonial form of self-government. But the goal of the Extremists or the militant nationalists was complete independence for India. They aimed at complete *Swarajya*. One of their leaders. B. G. Tilak declared that "*Swarajya* is my birth-right and I shall have it." B. G. Tilak gave his message to the people through his newspaper. *Kesri*, while B.C. Pal carried on his message through *New India* in Bengal. *Lala* Lajpat Rai who was inspired by the Arya Samaj gave the same message to the people in Panjab. His views were influenced by religion and he exhibited religious fervour in his speeches and actions. The same way B. G. Tilak added religious dedication to the struggle for political independence. He started *Ganesh Puja* and celebrated Shivaji's birthday with dedicated vigour with a view to arousing the national feeling among the people of Maharashtra. But above them, all the man who raised politics to the plane of spiritualism was Aurobindo Ghosh. Of course, he soonafter left politics and fled to Pondicherry in 1910, yet he gave a philosophy to Indian Extremism. He gave first priority to independence. He declared : "Political freedom is

the life-breath of a nation ; to attempt for social reforms, educational reforms, industrial expansion and the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility." He taught the people to be fearless of repression. He observed : "Repression is nothing but the hammer of God...without suffering there can be no growth..." Thus, the Extremists were convinced that India could gain no advantage from its relations with Britain and gradual constitutional reforms were no remedy for India's problems. Therefore, complete independence was their only goal. They aimed at it and were prepared to make all sacrifices to achieve it.

In the techniques or the means to achieve their end, the Extremists also differed very much from the Moderates. B. G. Tilak had once observed : "It is not by our purpose but by our methods that our party has earned the name of extremism." The Extremists had no faith in passing resolutions, submitting petitions and delegations and, thus, requesting the government for everything and everytime. They declared it as 'political beggary' or at best 'political opportunism.' At the Congress Session at Banaras in 1905, *Lala* Lajpat Rai expressed the view that an Englishman disliked a beggar most and, therefore, we should prove to them that we were no beggars. B. C. Pal also declared that we should not take anything from the British as gift but by self-efforts. The same way B. G. Tilak said : "Our ideal was not mercy from any quarter but self-reliance." Therefore, the Extremists rejected completely the techniques of the Moderates. 'Petitioning' was rejected as mad and fantastic and the technique of 'self-development' was rejected as vague and inadequate. The Extremists, therefore, preached the policy of 'Passive Resistance' as the only effective means by which India could attain Independence. Aurobindo explained the philosophy of 'Passive Resistance' in a series of seven articles published in *Bande Mataram* in 1907. He wrote : "The essential difference between passive or defensive and active or aggressive resistance is this while the method of aggressive resistance is to do something by which one can bring positive harm to the government, the method of passive resistance is to abstain from doing something by which he would be helping the government. The object in both cases is the same—to force the hands of the government. The line of attack is different." This sort of 'Passive Resistance' was adopted by the Extremists. In no way did the Extremists preach violence against the government. They did not choose even to disobey its laws. They simply suggested to withdraw the cooperation of the people from the government, directly or indirectly. Therefore, in fact, they suggested boycott movement to be pursued. They asked the people to refuse to cooperate with the government in the industrial exploitation of the country, in education, in government, in judicial administration and in the process of official intercourse. The technique, thus, also helped in propagating the concept of *Swadeshi* and laid emphasis on National education. Therefore, the boycott of foreign goods, the

use of *Swadeshi* goods and emphasis on National education, the techniques which were evolved by the Indians during the 'anti-partition of Bengal agitation' remained the primary means and techniques of the Extremists to attain Independence.

The difference between the Moderates and the Extremists, finally, resulted in the split of the Congress at Surat in 1907. At that time the Moderates gained upper hand and the Extremists were turned out of the Congress. They lost their leaders also for the time being. Tilak was imprisoned for six years in 1908, B. C. Pal retired from active politics, Aurobindo fled to Pondicherry in 1910 and Lajpat Rai went on a sojourn to U.S.A. in 1914. But the movement again gained momentum with the formation of 'Home Rule League' by Tilak after his release from prison and with the coming into being of another 'League' by Mrs. Annie Besant. Finally, the Extremists were taken back into the Congress fold in 1916 and since then got hold of it as, by then, they had a larger following because of the changed circumstances in the country.

The capture of the Congress by the Extremists or the militant nationalists, itself, was a proof of the desirability and success of the Extremists. Besides, the Extremists too made a solid contribution to the national movement. Their objective of *Poorna Swarajya* inspired the people, their techniques of boycott and *Swadeshi* brought not only economic advantage to the Indians but prepared them to make sacrifices for the sake of their country and their programme of national education meant and aimed at the cultural regeneration of the Indian youths. All of these proved beneficial to the Indians in the long run. Even Gandhiji adopted the techniques of the Extremists later on. The non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji was practically the Boycott and *Swadeshi* Movement on a larger scale. Besides, the Extremists, certainly, brought the Congress nearer to the middle and lower middle class, if not the common people. Prior to the rise of Extremism, Indian nationalism was limited to the highly educated and mostly wealthy classess of India but afterwards it no more remained like that. The people placed lower than the rich in the social hierarchy also absorbed the fundamentals of Indian nationalism. The leaders of the Extremists made sacrifices as well and became the objects of the wrath of the government. That caught the imagination of the common people of India as well at least on regional basis. Lajpat Rai got due honour from the people of Punjab, B. C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh inspired the young people of Bengal and the common people started protests ; and the labour class of several Mills of Bombay observed *Hartal* when B. G. Tilak was sentenced for imprisonment in 1908. Thus, the Extremists played an important part in national awakening as well.

It has been expressed by several scholars that the Extremisls involved religion with politics and their militancy was primarily the militancy of Hinduism. That brought forth communalism in Indian politics. But it is too vague a charge. Tilak, Lajpat Rai and

Aurobindo Ghosh certainly, were inspired by Hindu religion. But they were no communalists. They adopted certain means which seemed inspired by religion but those means were adopted to involve the common people of India in the national movement. In no way, did they preach or act against any religious community. Of course, the British used their innocence for their advantage and tried to dissociate the Muslims from the national movement and partly succeeded.

Points to Remember

1. Extremism grew within the Congress due to several factors and the so-called militant nationalists were the young Congressmen.
2. The Extremists differed from the Moderates in political ideology, objectives and techniques as well but preferred not to go out of the Congress but to capture it from within.
3. While the Moderates believed in British sense of justice and regarded relations with Britain beneficial to the Indians, the Extremists had no faith in the British and found no good in keeping relations with Britain.
4. While the final goal of the Moderates was the attainment of Colonial form of self-government, the goal of the Extremists was *Poorna Swarajya.*
5. Tilak declared that '*Swarajya* is my birthright and I shall have it'.
6. Tilak gave his message through *Kesri,* B. C. Pal through *New India* and Lajpat Rai by his speeches and writings.
7. However, Aurobindo raised politics to the plane of spiritualism and gave a philosophy to Indian extremism.
8. While the techniques of the Moderates were those of 'resolutions and requests' described as 'political beggary' or 'political opportunism', the Extremists believed in self-efforts and preached the policy of 'passive resistance' which was explained by Aurobindo in a series of seven articles published in *Bande Mataram* in 1907.
9. Finally, boycott of foreign goods, use of *Swadeshi* goods and emphasis on national education remained the primary means of the Extremists to attain Independence.
10. The difference between the two groups resulted in the split of the Congress at Surat in 1907, though, ultimately, the two groups were united in 1916 and the Extremists became dominant in the Congress.
11. The object of *Poorna Swarajya* of the Extremists inspired the people while 'boycott' and *Swadeshi* brought economic advantage to the Indians and prepared them to make certain sacrifices.

12. National education helped in the cultural regeneration of Indian youths.
13. Even Gandhiji later on adopted these very techniques of the Extremists.
14. The Extremists brought the Congress nearer to the middle and lower middle class.
15. The sacrifices of the Extremist leaders caught the pulse of the Indian people and as such they were revered by the common people.
16. Thus, the Extremists played an important role in national awakening.
17. The leaders of the Extremists have been charged of bringing religion in politics.
18. Of course, those leaders were inspired by Hindu religion but, in no way, they were communal.

Q. 3. Describe the causes and circumstances leading to the split of the All-India Congress at Surat in 1907.

The Moderates and the Extremists or the militant nationalists differed from one another in their objectives and techniques. While the Moderates finally fixed up self-government by gradual process as their goal and kept their activities within constitutional limits, the Extremists kept *Poorna Swarajya* as their objective and chose to offer passive resistance to the government to achieve it. The root cause of their difference in their objectives and techniques was the difference in their ideology. The Moderates largely had faith in the British sense of justice and even when their hopes were belied were not prepared to change their views while the Extremists had no faith in the British and, therefore, chose the path of struggle.

The differences between the two became quite clear at the annual session of the Congress at Banaras in 1905. G. K. Ghokhale was the President of the Congress that year. The Moderates and the Extremists came in conflict with one another in the Subject-Committee on the question whether the Prince of Wales was to be felicitated or not on arrival in India. The Moderates desired to felicitate him which was opposed by the Extremists. However, the Moderates passed the resolution by the majority and, later on, the Extremists kept silent over it. But then the differences between the two groups again became visible when a boycott-resolution was passed as a measure of anti-partition of Bengal Movement. The Extremist leader, *Lala* Lajpat Rai, in his speech, suggested to adopt *Satyagraha* as a means for revoking the partition of Bengal. But, it was too much for the Moderates who hardly agreed in favour of the boycott resolution.

In 1906, on the eve of the Calcutta Session of the Congress, the differences between the Moderates and the Extremists became

more sharp. The Extremists desired to choose either B. G. Tilak or *Lala* Lajpat Rai as the Congress President but the Moderates were not prepared to pass on leadership into the hands of the Extremists. They, therefore, requested Dada Bhai Nauroji to come back from Britain and take over the Presidentship of the Congress. The Extremists chose not to oppose the eighty-one year old stalwart leader of the Congress. The conflict, therefore, was avoided. But again differences between the two cropped up on the boycott issue. While the Moderates insisted that the movement of boycott and *Swadeshi* should be limited to Bengal the Extremists desired that the movement should be carried on in other provinces as well. Afterwards, resolutions were passed concerning *Swarajya*, boycott, *Swadeshi* and national education but the language of the resolutions was kept vague so that the Moderates and the Extremists interpreted them as they thought best for themselves. It meant simply avoiding the conflict between the two groups temporarily. The cause of conflict between the two groups had become deeper by that time. While the Moderates did not want to go beyond the constitutional means to achieve their objectives, the Extremists desired to capture the leadership of the Congress with a view to making it an instrument in fighting the British. Therefore, the conflict between the two could not be avoided for long.

The conflict between the two occurred next year. At the Calcutta session of the Congress, it was decided to hold the next session at Nagpur. But in view of the growing differences between the two groups, the Moderates changed the venue to Surat which was a more suitable place for them. The next session of the Congress was, therefore, held at the banks of the river Tapti at Surat in 1907. The crisis began with the process for electing the President. The Moderates put up Ras Behari Ghosh as their candidate while the Extremists desired to propose the name of *Lala* Lajpat Rai. But as Lajpat Rai himself did not desire it, Ras Behari Ghosh was elected as the President. The immediate crisis was, thus, over. But both the Moderates and the Extremists were fully prepared to have a trial of strength and so the conflict could not be avoided. The Extremists insisted that the resolutions concerning *Swarajya*, boycott, *Swadeshi* and national education which were passed at the Calcutta session of the Congress should be completely endorsed. The Moderates, however, desired to dilute them. Efforts were made to strike a compromise but with no result. Finally, when B. G. Tilak came on the dais to deliver his speech, physical violence between the two groups erupted. That brought in the Police which cleared the Congress Pandal by force. The Moderates, who were in majority at that time, turned out the leaders of the Extremists from the Congress and, thus, took place the split of the Congress at Surat in 1907.

The split of the Congress at Surat weakened the fabric of the national movement. The Extremists lost their leaders soon. In 1908 B. G. Tilak was imprisoned for six years and sent to Mandaley ; Aurobindo Ghosh left politics and left for Pandicherry in 1910 ;

B. C. Pal also retired from active politics for some time ; and *Lala* Lajpat Rai went to Britain in 1908 and after returning from there in 1909, left for U.S.A. in 1914. Therefore the Extremists lost their hold on Indian politics. The Moderates, in turn, repealed the resolutions which were passed by the Congress under the influence of the militant nationalists or the Extremists. They, thus, failed to give any new direction to the national movement. Thus, the national movement suffered and the government got the opportunity to pass some repressive laws like 'The Seditious Meetings Act' in 1907 and 'The Press Act' in 1910.

Yet, the efforts of the nationalists, whether the Moderates or the Extremists, did not go in vain. The Minto-Morley Act was passed in 1909 and the partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 to calm the Indians.

Points to Remember

1. The Moderates and the Extremists differed in ideology, objectives and techniques.
2. The differences between the two groups became clear even at the Banaras session of the Congress in 1905 over the questions of felicitation of prince of wales and adoption of *Satyagraha* as a means to revoke the partition of Bengal.
3. Differences again arose at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906 on the question of Presidentship itself and afterwards on resolutions concerning *Swarajya,* boycott, *Swadeshi* and national education.
4. However, the conflict could not be avoided at the Surat Session of the Congress in 1907.
5. Though the crisis over the Presidentship could be diffused because of the voluntary withdrawal of Lajpat Rai from the contest but the attempt of the Moderates to dilute the resolutions already passed at the Calcutta Session concerning *Swarajya,* boycott, *Swadeshi* and national education erupted violence which, finally, resulted in turning out the leaders of the Extremists from the Congress.
6. The Extremists soon lost their all important leaders and thus they lost hold over politics.
7. The Moderates repealed the resolutions passed at the Calcutta Session and failed to give any new direction to the national movement.
8. Therefore, the national movement suffered setback and the government got the opportunity to pass certain repressive laws like 'The Seditious Meetings Act' and 'The Press Act'.
9. Yet, the efforts of the nationalists did not go in vain as 'The Minto-Morley Act' was passed in 1909 and the partition of Bengal was annuled in 1911.